A WAYFARER'S CARAVAN

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By A. ALEXANDER

Author of "A Wayfarer's Log"

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"Here is another George Borrow!" exclaimed the *Evening Standard's* reviewer of Mr. Alexander's previous book, "A Wayfarer's Log." "Here are the same delight in jogging along the roads and over the heather, the same power of drawing out the friendliness of gypsies and other wayfarers, the same physical strength and joy in the battle of the fists, the same instinct for describing adventures in simple, powerful English." "A Wayfarer's Caravan" is in the same vein. It describes a journey by road from the east coast of England to the west coast of Ireland, and tells of the joys and the misfortunes met with over wild moors, valleys, mountain passes, and lonely bogs.

LONDON: JOHN MURRAY.

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A WAYFARER'S LOG

By A. ALEXANDER

Evening Standard:—"'Here is another George Borrow!' one involuntarily exclaims. 'Here are the same delight in jogging along the roads and over the heather, the same power of drawing out the friendliness of gypsies and other wayfarers, the same physical strength and joy in the battle of the fists, the same instinct for describing adventures in simple, powerful English.'"

Daily Mail:—"It is a book which reminds one of George Borrow. There is fighting in it, there is plenty of open air, and a jolly enjoyment of life which makes Mr. Alexander a stimulating companion. He has known all sorts of famous people . . . and met them with a frank readiness to tell them what he thought."

Daily Graphic:—"There is a refreshing touch about these reminiscences, because the author is ever on the move, so that the reader is on tramp one minute, visiting old inns and wayside cottages, exploring caves or cliffs the next, or climbing mountains, or listening to the roaring winds and mighty seas."

The Observer:—"Throughout this interesting narrative we are constantly meeting celebrities in politics, society, and art, and, better still, most entertaining gypsies and tramps."

Birmingham Post:—"His book is full of good stories and pleasant memories both of men and places. . . . Mr. Alexander's book is one to dip into for entertainment, and also to read from cover to cover.'

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

A WAYFARER'S LOG

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—*The Evening Standard.*

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BY A. ALEXANDER, F.R.G.S.

AUTHOR OF "A WAYFARER'S LOG"

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.
1921

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TO

MY HORSE DRUMMER AND TO MY DOG CON,

FAITHFUL COMPANIONS BOTH

FOREWORD

BY VISCOUNT GLADSTONE, G.C.B., G.C.M.G.

THE coming publication of another book from your pen gives me much pleasure. An account of the "open road" and all that it means is appropriate to your life's work for the *mens sana in corpore sano.*

You will, I am sure, give us a true and interesting picture of English out-of-door life, with your varied knowledge of humanity and in the right spirit born of the cheerful and vigorous *régime* of the gymnasium and concerted physical action and training.

My best wishes for the success of the book.

G.

May, 1921.

PREFACE

The kind way in which the press and public received "A Wayfarer's Log," and the numerous letters I have received expressing a desire for another similar work, has induced me to write this book. It is a description of a caravan journey from the East Coast of England to the West Coast of Ireland, and once more I invite my readers to accompany me over the moors and dales, the valleys and mountains; over the sea and across the bogs to the wild Atlantic coast. To meet and talk with all sorts of people of high and low degree, Lords and Ladies, Circus-riders and Mummers, Tinkers and Horse-stealers, Gypsies and Tramps; to converse with and enjoy their philosophy, their romance, their adventures, their sentiments, and their natural unsophisticated humour. To enjoy the pure air of health; to view the varied landscape; to inhale the sweet-scented hedgerows; to admire the jewel-winged butterflies and the passing and carolling of birds. All this I hope will be found in "A Wayfarer's Caravan."

A. A.

RBC
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A WAYFARER'S CARAVAN

CHAPTER I

ON THE ROAD

THE long open road lay before me; I had left the sea, that restless North Sea, with its fierce, combative, thunderous billows, behind. It seemed incredible that I should at last be realising one of the dreams of my life. I had walked or ridden over many roads, but I had not, hitherto, undertaken a long caravan trip. This at last had been rendered possible by the good nature of my friend Professor T——, who, being summoned to America, had very kindly offered me the use of his caravan. He had left it on the East Coast, and thither I speedily repaired in order to take possession.

I found it in a field belonging to a large farm close to the sea, and after confirming the arrangements entered into by T—— with the farmer for the hire of a horse and laying in of stores, it did not take me long before I was out on the road *en route* for—well, I had not quite made up my mind as to that, except that I should go westward.

I had brought with me as a companion my small Pekinese dog, and from a "Where is it?" book alphabetically arranged, with which T——

had furnished me, I found all essential information respecting the van.

The horse Drummer was a noble animal, large and powerful, with dark bay glossy skin, and pulled the van along as though it were a box containing pigmies. He wanted no encouragement from me, but proceeded on his way, as though he were breaking a record, with "Duty" ever before him as his mascot. Con, the small dog, did indeed, by sundry yaps and barks, endeavour to play the tyrant over him, which Drummer only answered by certain prickings of the ears and an occasional swish of his tail.

We were gradually ascending a beautiful old country road, green with pastures on every side; green with corn and growing vegetables, green with the shade of tall chestnut and oak trees, now lit up with touches of sunlight. It was the silent month for birds, but I had noticed them all the same. Numbers of thrushes, bullfinches, linnets, and blackbirds. I listened to the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," the tiny robin, whom nature leaves behind for our delectation, and to remind us that the voices of bird-land are not dead, but only sleep.

A cloud of colour lay in front of us; the blue chicory blossom, the mauve scabious, and the inevitable thistle, never far away. The strong odour of meadow-sweet pervaded the air. Everything was fresh and enchanting, and gave future promise of a paradise of colour.

We now came to a slight rise, and I, therefore, walked along enjoying the exercise, as also did Con, who scampered on ahead, barking gleefully

and disappearing in and out of the hedgerows with great industry. When we had surmounted the rise we came upon a pleasant little clearing of green pasture. "An ideal place for luncheon" was my inward comment, and thereupon I called a halt, taking Drummer out of the shafts, and giving him a liberty which he was not slow to take advantage of, nibbling tit-bits from every bush. I then cooked my dinner, chops with tomatoes and potatoes, finishing up with a couple of fruit tarts, with which I had provided myself.

Con, as may be imagined, took a special interest in all these preparations, and when at last I had spread a tablecloth, and placed our dinner thereon, his enthusiasm was unbounded.

"Patience, Con," said I. "In a short time this chop will be reduced to skeleton proportions, and then your turn will come."

He looked at me thoughtfully, wrinkled his nose and said as plainly as any dog could speak, "Good master, I will wait my turn; you never deceive me. I will content myself with sniffing and looking on in anticipation."

He had not long to wait, and I was once more trying to solve the mystery of how dogs negotiated bones in their interior.

Now, it is a very extraordinary thing, but I don't believe I have ever been on the road enjoying a repast without the inevitable tramp turning up, and sure enough here was one now approaching. I had not noticed his coming until he was upon me, and concluded that he must have been taking a siesta not very far away. He was a typical tramp, with a tramp's face and a tramp's cap upon his

head, and carried the usual small bundle. He, of course, looked weary as he approached, as though he had not rested for many miles, probably not since sunrise, and was a study in weariness and want. Con attacked his feet with great spirit.

"It's alright, gentleman," said he as I called the dog off. "I'm used to 'em. I wears spats that a kind gentleman once gave me, an' I wears 'em under me trousers." He displayed them. "It's not so good for walkin', but it's wot I call reassurin', 'specially when 'rabies' is about; but I wouldn't mind a bite from that little dog, 'e's a nice little dog an' only does 'is dooty, as we should all do one to another."

He cast a hungry look at the remains of the dinner, heaved a heavy sigh, and asked me for the loan of a match.

"Travelled far?" said I, as I handed him one.

"Travelled far!—why I allus am travellin'. No rest for such as me. All the way from Lunnon lookin' for work as never turns up."

"Finish off that chop and those potatoes," said I, "and then get along."

"Thank you, sir," said the man as he shuffled towards the viands. "An' may I take 'em wi' me, sir, in this bundle? You see I may meet another fellow-sufferer in distress, an' as I say, it's our dooty to 'elp one another."

I nodded consent, and, wrapping the food in a piece of newspaper, he placed it in his bundle; then puffing vigorously at his pipe, examined it, and found to his surprise, that he had no tobacco. I supplied him with some.

"Aren't you searching in the wrong direction for work?" said I.

"It's all the same; towns used to be good for work, but now them blessed trade unions won't let you do a stroke unless you belongs to 'em an' are on their books. No such word as 'freedom' now, that's why I'm on the road, trustin' to luck, and kind gentlemen like you. Now you don't 'appen to want a valet or a coachman, or a 'ostler, or all three together? I'd travel about wi' you an' keep the carriage an' the hoss beautifully clean, an' I'd wash the little dog an' take 'im out for 'is airings. I'd——"

"No, thank you," said I. "That would leave me no work to do, and I've come out to work and to do things for myself; it does me good."

"'Um," said the man. "Well, there's no accountin' for taste, but if I were a millionaire like you, gentleman, I'd spend all my time in Lunnon; that's the place to henjoy yourself."

A whimsical idea occurred to me. I took out the "Where is it?" book from my pocket and turned to the letter T. There it was, sure enough —"Tramps." I smiled.

"Beggin' your pardon, sir, but is that a Prayer Book? It's a long time since I 'ad a Prayer Book. When I get enough money I'll buy one."

"This," said I, "is a book giving information about everything, alphabetically arranged—A, B, C, and so on. Now under the letter T. it says 'Tramps,' and tells you what you have to do with them."

"Lor, sir! an' what does it say?"

"It says—'Shoot them.'"

"Lor, sir! You don't say so. Well, it's time for me to be hoff."

He rose. I gave him a coin.

"I won't shoot you this time," said I; "but the next time——"

"Good-day, sir," said he hastily, and he moved away quickly.

I washed up the dinner things, watered Drummer and Con, and gave myself a drink, for I had discovered from the "Where is it?" under the letter W. that the water which poured from a tap into a small basin near the foot of the bed, came from a reservoir containing two days' supply.

I now placed Drummer in the shafts, and with a click of the tongue we once more commenced our journey.

The road still maintained its wild character, and I inferred that I was probably on an old road which had been superseded by a newer one, for all that afternoon we met no one to inquire our way, the only information I could obtain was from old defaced milestones, half buried beneath, and sometimes entirely covered with, wild bramble and undergrowth. At length, however, the faint tip of a spire loomed in the distance, and as we approached nearer there were signs of cultivation in the fields, and of civilisation close by. In a short time we had reached the outskirts of a village.

CHAPTER II

THE MOOR GYPSIES

We passed through the long straggling street of the village, an object of curiosity and free criticism. Gossips stood at their doors, and in loud tones expressed their opinion of the van, the horse, the dog and myself.

"Yond's not a show van."

"Nay, the hoss is too fat."

"Aye, and the mister looks too simple."

"An' the dog, see that little dog, is a pet 'un and gets plenty to ate."

"P'raps he be a photo-grapher."

The children came nearer, trying to peer into the interior, and one bold youngster asked me where was my missus? and another: When was the show coming on? Men lounged at the door of the inn, and were not less voluble in their comments, loudly given.

"Private gent, I should say."

"Maybe has summat to sell."

"P'raps a Temperance chap." Then one loud voice challenged me.

"Say, mister, what are 'ee?"

Now, I think it is generally admitted that a fool's best asset is silence, and I felt very much inclined to do the "fool" on this occasion; but

I duly remembered that politeness is also considered a good asset of those not mentally defective, so I shouted back to my interlocutor.

"Taking a holiday," smiling at him the while.

"Aye, an' a good way too. I wouldn't mind doing t' same thing mesel, but why haven't thi got thy missus wi' thi ?"

I shook my head in a non-committal way, which encouraged another voice to remark—

"They're best left at 'ome, I reckon."

We went by, escorted by a group of mongrels whose barks were not musical, and offended the more cultured intuition of Drummer and Con, the latter of whom loudly protested his opinion of the "low creatures" in very dignified, not to say aristocratic barkings. On the whole the temptation to stay the evening there was not particularly great, and Drummer's powerful feet soon left the village and its inhabitants behind.

For a mile or two there were fields of cereals and root crops at either side of the road, then pastures, and finally, wild moorland. I had a strange feeling within me that I could scarcely define. It was not the first time that I had caravanned, for I had often had short trips before with all sorts and conditions of people, so that I did not lack experience, but this was the first occasion on which I was my own "skipper," with a good ship and lawful authority and responsibility over a crew of two. This was putting the matter nautically, and so, as any self-respecting ship-master would do, I commenced to look out for a suitable port to halt for supper and camp for the night.

We had come to a gentle descent and, as it

afterwards became more steep, I put the skid-pan on the wheel, for the first time, which allowed Drummer to take his burden down in very comfortable fashion. There was a short, strongly built, but rather narrow bridge at the foot, with a shallow watercourse lazily butting some granite boulders ere it meandered underneath the single arch. There was a grass plot on the right at the farther side, with a few overhanging trees, which seemed idyllic as a resting-place. I paused on the bridge, dismounted and examined the spot, and, as it seemed quite satisfactory, I guided Drummer on to the grass, taking care that we had a good background for possible winds, and plenty of room to turn when we recommenced our journey. I then took Drummer out of the shafts, and, taking him into the patchwork stream, gave him as good a wash as was possible under the circumstances, supplementing it with the curry comb and brush; attentions for which he seemed consciously grateful. Then I seized hold of the smaller animal, giving him a bath and a rub down for which he did not appear equally grateful, for he sulked and growled like a small grumbling boy. When teatime came, however, we all recovered our spirits.

T—— had left behind him a small bookshelf which contained not only a "Bradshaw" and some road maps, but also a collection of miniature classics, and into these I dabbled for some time; then, feeling the need for some exercise before I settled down for the night, I locked up Con in the van, and giving Drummer a halter with a few yards of line, tied him to the wheel.

I then made the best of my way up the hill to see what was in store for us on the following morning. The hill was divided into a short, sharp gradient with two lesser gradients above it. Some fine chestnuts with a clump of sycamores bordered the first rise. The second comprised wild, uncut hedgerows, and, as I was ascending the third, which seemed to melt itself into the moor, I thought I heard voices, and, as I had met no one since leaving the village, the sounds arrested me.

I looked ahead expecting their owners to appear on the skyline every moment, but as they did not, and the sounds continued, I concluded there must be some small hamlet above. When, however, I reached sufficiently high to make any observation I saw some gypsy vans, and on the green sward in the front of these I saw, to my delight, some men engaged in a boxing bout.

I hurried up to see the fun, but when my presence was noticed, the gypsies stopped their boxing and I became the centre of their curiosity. There appeared to be four men, well-built fellows, an older man and his aged wife, these with some younger women and children and a couple of mongrel dogs made up the group. They all stared at me hard, waiting for me to pass and go on my way. I was disappointed, and, making the best of it, walked up to them.

"I am sorry you have stopped your fun. I saw you boxing and hoped to have the pleasure of seeing more of it, as I take a great interest in it," and I smiled ingratiatingly.

They all, however, preserved a sullen silence;

then one man came forward, and in a menacing voice told me to go on.

"But," said I, "I'm not going on. I am going back. My van is at the foot of the hill. I hope you will go on with your boxing. Perhaps you will allow me to have a turn with you."

A smile went round; there were one or two whispered comments in Romany, then the old dame screamed out.

"Do as the gentleman's ask you. A shilling for each try."

I stepped forward and gave my shilling. One of the men then, with rather a sardonic smile, handed me the gloves. For a moment I thought of taking off my coat, but second thoughts made me keep it on, and stuffing my cap into my pocket I squared up.

Now, although my old mentor—James Mace, champion pugilist of England, and one of the most scientific boxers England has ever produced—always insisted that I should adopt a certain attitude with my arms, a long practice had taught me that there was a distinct advantage in lowering the arms a little. This to the uninitiated would appear gross carelessness or ignorance, and I am sure that it had this effect on the gypsies before me, for they all smiled in anticipation of some amusement.

My opponent came at me rather carelessly, and I tipped him lightly as a caution; this surprised him a little, and he came on in better form, sparring for an opening. I gave him a feint, which he accepted, rushing in with a straight left; this, by a turn of the head, I avoided, and the

intended blow passed harmlessly to one side. I again feinted, and, as he appeared rather perplexed, I gave him a blow with my right on his left ribs, supplementing it with a tap with my left on his right cheek.

I could see that this small success caused a little consternation, for there was much whispering in Romany. The other men looked dangerous, and I was commencing to think what my next tactics would be, if I had to defend myself against the quartette. The gypsy I was boxing now made a sudden onslaught upon me, and although it was full of energy and verve, it lacked skill and co-ordination. I had him at my mercy, but, not wishing to invoke the animus of his companions, I contented myself with retreating and stepping aside. This greatly encouraged the gypsies, for apparently mistaking it for cowardice they forgot their dignity, and with shouts of encouragement urged their companion to make short work of me. These shouts seemed to raise his fury, and I was obliged to stop him with one or two straight ones. The shouts, however, continued, and in the height of the excitement I saw one of the gypsies stealthily making to the rear behind me. I heard a hurried sound. Instinct made me turn quickly. The fellow was rushing upon me with an uplifted rod of iron. I at once turned my attention to him and gave him a hooking cut with my left, and, noticing that his feet were "off guard," clicked them with my left foot, and jabbing him with my right, sent him sprawling on the grass.

There was now a commotion in the camp; the gypsies quickly armed themselves with the iron

rods used for supporting the cooking pot, or any other handy weapon they could lay hands upon, and things looked bad for a moment. The women and children, too, were becoming excited, and the dogs were sniffing hard at my feet. I had quite made up my mind that I was in for trouble, when the old gypsy came forward, and in a commanding voice ordered peace. Then coming to me he said sternly—

"Go your way, gentleman. You are a good fighter, but you are no use against four, and they will do you harm."

Then an inspiration seized me, for the thought suddenly occurred to me that here was a chance of making peace by an impromptu lecturette on my mission in life. I at once raised my hand to demand silence.

The old gypsy seconded my appeal by raising both hands, the men sullenly dropped their arms, though still maintaining a threatening attitude, the women and children aiding and abetting them in their excitement.

"I want to tell you," said I, "what I am, so that you may understand everything. Now, you go round with these vans selling your goods and doing trade in the villages. You do good to the villagers, and you do good to yourselves. That is just what I do. I go to towns and villages, and barracks, and tell the people there how to become healthy, so that they may enjoy life and live long. Boxing is one of the exercises I recommend for the boys and young men. It not only improves their health and their eyesight, but makes them quick and smart and strong. It also gives them

pluck and makes them brave, for no one attempts to ill-use a man or turn him into a liar if they know the man is a good boxer; they leave him alone, they respect him, and that man becomes a power. He is like a man armed; no one touches him, for they are afraid to do so, and wherever he goes he can help the weak, and maintain order just like a big policeman can amongst little men. Now I want to tell you a secret. I was taught boxing by one of the greatest boxers that ever lived. He was champion of England, and—he was a 'gypsy.'" For the first time a change came over the demeanour of the gypsies, their sullen and menacing looks relaxed. They looked at each other and at the old gypsy as though seeking an explanation. "His name was James Mace," I continued——

"Yes, yes; I knew him well," interrupted the old gypsy. "An' did you know 'Pony' Mace, his cousin? He was a good fighter."

"Yes," said I. "I knew 'Pony' Mace, but I knew James Mace very well, and his son Alfred, who is now a minister and preaches in the chapels and churches on Sundays."

All semblance of antagonism had now disappeared from the gypsies' features, and they were looking at me with interest and curiosity.

"I tell you these things," said I, "so that you may know I am a trader like you, only in a different way, and that I owe all my ability in boxing—if I have any—to a gypsy, one of yourselves. Now, if you like, I will give you one or two tips in boxing. First of all, you must not look at each other in the eyes. You don't fight

with the eyes; you must look at the fists, and the arms and the feet, especially the feet, because if you see the feet pointed straight towards you, you can by a side blow easily knock your man over."

I showed them the position. "Now my hands were much lower than my friend's here. He held them this way, which is too bent, and a blow cannot be given from this position unless you draw your arms back. The man you are fighting can see that, and it prepares him for what is coming. I hold my left arm down almost straight, so that it need not be drawn back for a blow, and my partner cannot see it coming. The blow, too, is much heavier. A blow from a bent arm is lighter and gives you time to avoid it by putting your head out of the way, like this, and leaves both your arms free to do some hitting. Now, if you practise these little things amongst yourselves, you will, after a time, become good 'booth boxers' and will earn many a sovereign. Good night," said I, holding out my hand to my late antagonist. He shook hands with me, and so did they all, women and children alike, and as I departed, in the now gathering dusk, I heard a wild whoop from them, which I took not only as an expression of exuberance amongst themselves, but as a sign of friendliness to me.

CHAPTER III

COMPANIONS OF THE ROAD

As I made my way down the hill towards the van I noticed that a mist was gathering over the valley, and I then understood why the gypsies preferred to camp on the moor-top rather than in the dip of the hills. It certainly was, at that time of the year, much healthier on the uplands, though no doubt it would be, later in the season, better to camp in the valleys in order to escape the winds.

When I came within sight of the van I whistled to announce my approach to the dog, and was gratified to hear my call answered in a series of barks. Looking around for Drummer I noted that he had made a bed for himself on the lee-side of the van, and was now breathing hard in blessed sleep. When I opened the door Con gave me a vociferous welcome. It is a strange thing this affinity between man and dog; human friendship is a great boon, but the friendship existing between a traveller and his dog is even greater. Humans are creatures of moods and cannot always be relied upon, but dogs never fail to evince their loyalty and faithfulness under all conditions and circumstances. Perhaps it is because the dog acknowledges the superiority of man, whereas humans

are uncertain and critical as to their relative positions.

I patted Con on the head, spoke reassuringly to him, pulled out his small basket bed, and suggested he should retire. He at once leaped in, and soon after I myself was lulled to sleep by the snoring of my small companion and the hard, heavy breathing of Drummer outside.

The sun, on the following morning, poured its hot rays through the off-side window, lighting up the interior as though it were mid-day. That tiny minstrel, the robin, was trilling a carol outside. Drummer was already munching away at the luscious grass, and Con, still curled up, was blinking at me with half-closed eyes. I got up, threw a coat over me, and, seizing a rough towel, went down to the brook to see what luck there was for a bath. A few yards higher up the stream I came upon a fair depth of water and into this I jumped. It was cool and refreshing. I invited Con to come in and share my enjoyment, but he would not, and stood looking at me in calm derision. He watched my ablutions, the drying process, and a few physical exercises with canine contempt, and hailed my return to the van with appreciation which generated into joy when I commenced to cook the breakfast.

This over, I harnessed Drummer, and in a few minutes we were out again on the road. Whatever doubts I had about the steepness of the first rise and the ability of Drummer to negotiate it, were soon dispelled, for he breasted the hill without hesitation, and in a short time we had surmounted the entire hill. I half expected to

see the gypsy camp still lulled in slumber, and was surprised to find that they were already on the road and apparently going in the same direction as myself. I travelled in their rear for some little time, wondering how long we were to remain companions of the road. I was soon found out by their dogs, who barked savagely at Con, and the latter, safely ensconced on the seat beside me, with his paws on the lower door, answered their challenges with equal ferocity. This had the effect of bringing up my opponent of the previous evening, who saluted me with a smiling "Good morning." I asked him where he was bound for.

"We have a day's journey before us," said he, "and then we take up 'Feast' work."

I came out and walked beside him on the road. He was a fine strapping fellow, dark-eyed, tanned, and looked the picture of health in his well-worn corduroys and flaming neckerchief.

"I am sorry I treated you a bit roughly last night," said I. "I hope you understand it was only done in sport. Next time we box it will be my turn to get the knocks."

He grinned and shook his head. "You're too 'andy with the mauleys for me; but I'm glad o' them tips you gave. We do a bit o' booth-punchin' at 'Feasts' sometimes, an' like to 'old our own. Now what 'ud you do if a man runs at you like this?" and, stooping, he lowered his head, protecting his face with his hands.

"Easy enough," said I. "You must under-cut, like this, and get him on the chin if you can. He will soon give up that game."

"Yes, that seems good; I'll try that. Rough,

savage chaps do it and catch you in the stomach with the top o' their nuts and knock the wind out o' you."

"Well, try the undercuts, and if you can't manage it at first, step on one side and give them one in the neck; they won't enjoy it!"

He laughed. "I'll try that with Nat," said he. "Nat is the 'Rom' you sprawled over. Good job too, he'd no right to come on you with that 'saster ran' (iron stick), although he meant well."

I laughed this time. "All's well that ends well," said I, "and if he meant well, why—so did I in 'grassing' him; but you should make your mates observe the rules of fair play. Boxing is boxing, but coming on you with an iron bar is foul play. Deal fairly in boxing as in all other things, and you will get the respect of all fair-minded men; but if you deal foully, they will despise you, and it may get you into trouble."

He looked at me keenly to see if I was in earnest, and, satisfying himself that I was so, looked puzzled at my logic.

"Nat meant well," he persisted, "for you see you were getting the better of us, and then where would we be?"

I laughed at his reasoning.

"Why," said I, "you would be alright. If I proved best on points you would only have to say so, or hold up your hand and the sport would be over, in my favour."

"That wouldn't do," he said sullenly. "That's not our way. If a man's too good for us, the others come in, an' we beat 'im off."

"That isn't right," said I. "There's a bit of murder in that. If ever you want to get on in boxing, you'll have to do what I say, and take everything in good part, then folks will respect you."

He walked on thoughtfully.

"It may be best," he admitted, "but it's not our way. I'll speak to them about it."

We walked along in silence for a time; he apparently busy with his thoughts; I breathing in the fresh pure air; taking in all the glamour of the scene; the gently rising moorland painted with suggestions rather than realities, for it was early in the season, of purple and gold. These indeed, in favoured situations, had commenced to bloom. The rolling valleys to the south interspersed with bracken, pasturage and crops, with distant hills afar off. The moor-road edged with savage rocks and thorny gorse; the cavalcade of vans; the haunting sound of a tuneful chorus from the front van. I looked at my companion.

"When all the land is like this I am not surprised at there being gypsies. I would almost like to be one myself."

"Why don't you? What are you?" said he, propounding a double question.

"First, because I think we must work as well as play; second, I am a teacher with many pupils who require my services. But in holiday times I am, what you would call a 'Dron-manus,' or road-man."

"Have you 'Romany Chipe'?" (gypsy speech).

"No, I have not. Many years ago I spoke a

little, and I shall always like it. It is picturesque. What is more beautiful than your word 'Rarde,' or 'Mute' for night? Does it not mean that nature is asleep and silent?"

"Romany is the fine way to talk. 'Gorgio' (non-gypsy) talk is new and hard to understand. Romany is old and is the 'Dye' (mother) of all words. If you are a 'Dron-manus'" he continued, looking at me, "where are your things? What do you sell? Are you a 'Rye Dron-manus'?" (gentleman road-man).

"If you mean by a gentleman, a rich man, I am not, but you must remember that the real gentleman is the man who deals fairly with every one he meets."

A broad smile passed over his features.

"There are no men like that. If there was they would be called 'Dinelos' (fools). The Romany always try to beat 'Gorgios' at bargains and everything."

"Yes, that is what we think about you; but it is not always right to do so. I would not care to do it."

"Then you must be a 'Dinelo.'"

"What is your name?" I inquired, turning to him.

"Luke Boswell. We are all Boswells. Our father is Ephraim Boswell."

"A Boswell, are you? Then I know some of you. Don't you know Jim and Harry Boswell, the horse trainers, and their sister Nellie? They are old friends of mine."

"Yes, I know them, they belong to our 'Coko' (uncle); but they have left the 'Dron'

(road) and gone into the 'Gav' (towns) to live—a poor thing to do."

"The Boswells bear quite a good name," said I. "One day I was talking to the wife of a famous preacher, and she told me that she was a Boswell before she married. Then there was a great Boswell who wrote a great book for all men to admire."

"Yes, there have been great Boswells. Our 'Batu' (father) is a great Boswell. There have been great people amongst the Romanies," he added complacently, "but the greatest of them all is Jem Mace. He is a 'Kosko Rom' (good gypsy); all the others are nothing but 'Scoppelos'" (ninnies).

Suddenly the vans stopped.

"What is the matter?" I inquired.

"'Habben'" (dinner), replied he, and he hurried forward.

It was a well-selected spot, the road was wild and lonely, scrub moorland on the right, and fairly good pasture on the left. I unharnessed Drummer, who immediately commenced to feed on the grass patch at the side, and then returned indoors to look after the wants of Con and myself.

Con wagged his bushy tail in approval as he saw me preparing a chop, for chops contain bones, and Con was fond of bones.

We all, I think, did justice to our dinner, and, as I saw the gypsies taking their horses down to a brook on the left, I followed their example, leading Drummer by the bridle.

There was some danger of warfare between our dogs, and I, in fact, was obliged to pick up Master Con to prevent his annihilation.

The gypsies greeted me in friendly fashion, and Nat, whom I had "sprawled" on the previous evening, appeared to bear me no ill-will over the mishap. Old Ephraim approached and shook hands with me, asking me particulars of my route, and said we should be together for the whole of the day, when we would probably part at a certain cross-roads.

"You must come and sup with us this evening," said he. "We don't have gentlemen to sup, but Luke says that you are a 'Kosko Dron-manus,' and that is enough for us."

I thanked him, and said I would be very glad indeed to come. He admired Drummer, and said he was a 'Kosko Gry' (good horse).

Then Luke brought Mrs. Luke and introduced us, as well as two chubby, mischievous-looking youngsters, whom I mollified by giving some coins, telling them to buy sweets at the very first shop they came to.

Mrs. Luke and the other women were enthusiastic over Con, who, safe under my arm, growled fiercely at them, causing much merriment and good humour. Then old Ephraim shouted out some command in Romany, which caused all hands to return to their vans and prepare for the road, I following their example, and in a short time the cracking of whips, the rumbling of wheels, the barking of dogs, and happy peals of laughter, denoted we were once more on our journey.

CHAPTER IV

THE BOSWELLS

THE road was fairly good going, for, although we had occasional steep bits, the surface was hard.

The Boswells appeared to have a little trouble, for their horses were not so heavy and powerful as Drummer, and they often, time after time, watched the progress of that noble beast with admiration and envious eyes. Old Ephraim went so far as to parley with me about its purchase, and when I explained that it was not my property, but only hired from a farmer, his face could not conceal the astonishment that a farmer could trust me with so valuable a horse so far away, beyond his jurisdiction. His looks were at last transformed into words.

"The 'Farm-engro' (farmer) would not trust his 'Gry' so far away with a 'Romany Chal,' and yet we would trust him."

"That is easily understood," said I. "The 'Farm-engro' has his house and lands which he cannot remove, but the Romany are a wandering people who go here and there and vanish on the roads."

"That is true, 'Rye'; but are you not also a traveller who could hide for many summers?"

"No," said I, laughing, "that would never

do. If 'Gorgio Ryes' do not keep their bond the law follows them with a summons, and they must pay up or go to prison."

"They would not find a 'Romany Chal,'" said Ephraim, with conviction, "and if they did, he would tell them how the 'Gry' was lost on the moors, and could not be found."

"That would not be honest. You must deal fair and square if you wish to be respected."

"Honest! Fair and square!" repeated Ephraim, "there are no such words in the 'Romany Chipe.' The 'Farm-engros' and 'Gorgios' tell lies about us, and we fight them as well as we can."

We had arrived at a small moorland cottage, probably the abode of a road-mender, and, as though to give point to his belief respecting the strained relations existing between his folk and the country people, a child, who had run out to view the caravans was hotly pursued by its mother, who, snatching it up, conveyed it indoors, bolting the door behind her. I smiled, but Ephraim scowled.

"Did I not tell you?" he said. "They think we eat up their brats."

"Only the ignorant hold such views," said I. "The well-educated 'Gorgios' are well disposed towards the Romany. Did you ever hear of the 'Lavengro,' a big tall 'Gorgio' who thought so highly of you?"

"Yes, over the 'Tan' (tent) fire when I was a 'Chal' (child). He is dead; there have been many 'Lavengros' since. To-day, at the cross-roads, we will see one; he is a 'Bovalo Gorgio'

and gives 'Lovo' (money) to our people, but he is 'Chor-ing' (stealing) our 'Gudlo Chi' (sweetest girl); she is my 'Pal's Chi' (friend's child). All the Romany, the young Romany," he added, somewhat mournfully, "'Jib' and trade with the 'Gorgios' more than our 'Batus' (fathers) did."

"That may be a good thing," said I. "The more you trade with town-folk, the better you may like them. They may not be so bad as you imagine them to be."

"We are not of their ways, and they are not of ours. In my 'Batu's' day the sun was our friend, for it swelled the fruit and the grass, making the animals fat, all good for our pot. The moon was our friend, for it lighted the 'Gorgios' to our 'Tan' (tent), where they crossed the hands of our 'Juva' (women) with 'Lovo' to learn their 'Bokht' (fate). The stars were our friends, for they showed us the way all over the land. No Romany can be lost when the stars are shining. They are the eyes of the great spirit who counts every night his children—the Romany. The beasts, the trees, and the grass, all are his. The winds were our friends—four big 'Pals' (brothers) blowing from different parts, sending warnings to us what to do; to take shelter, to light our fires, to go south and to go north. Food and drink they was, better than any 'Drabengro' (apothecary). All this warmed our hearts, 'Rye,' but now the country is getting smaller. Towns are setting up on the lonely places; the new Romany go to these places, there is no room on the 'Dron.' Many are going to America, where there is more

country; more trees to see; more winds to breathe; less 'Gorgio' and more 'Dron' for to wander upon." He shook his head sadly and moved off to the front van.

The horses had had a long and gentle rise, and were now having a breather on the summit.

I felt Drummer's neck for moisture, but he had not turned a hair, and leashing Con, took him for a run amongst the bracken and heather, keeping one eye upon the mongrels at the front. He enjoyed his romp with me, and when the vans again moved off, did not relish his temporary imprisonment from his foes.

One or two tramps passed us, and I noted that they did not ask even for a match from the occupants of the vans, but hurried on their way with some slight appearance of fear on their usually hardened features.

When they saw me, however, they wavered for a moment, looked puzzled, and then walked on, which convinced me that I, too, was commencing to show some resemblance, by reason of my tanned appearance, to my gypsy companions.

The road now became undulating, which is the best kind of road for man or beast, inasmuch as it alternately rests the varied muscles of the body. The children, and one or two of the young gypsies, lingered behind out of curiosity, to look at the 'Gorgio Dron-manus.' I tried to engage them in conversation, but they were bad subjects, and only answered in monosyllables. When Ephraim Boswell rejoined me, they betook themselves off.

"The youngsters have not much talk," said I to Boswell, as the latter walked by my side.

"They have plenty," said he, "but fear to talk to you. They do not talk to 'Gorgios,' except in trade. They know there is clouds between them."

"How foolish! The more people one talks to the more experience we get, and that is always useful, if not always entertaining."

Boswell shook his head, and asked me particulars of my journey. I told him that on to-morrow evening I was due at a large town, and was wondering what I should do with my caravan. He advised me to take it to within a few miles of the town, and place it in the stable-yard of an old inn called the Plough.

"You can stable your 'Gry' and fasten up your 'Juggal' (dog) in the van until the morning. It is a pity you have to go to a 'Gav' when you are on the 'Dron.'"

"But sometimes you have to go into a town," I remarked.

"When we pass through them, or in winter when we stay in the stable-yard with our vans."

"You will not like that, I suppose."

"No, we do not like it, and that is why we do not like the winter. It is cold, the snow hides the trees, and the moors are all white like death."

"Yes," I agreed; "but the white sepulchre of winter holds many sleeping beauties waiting for the resurrection of spring. Then when spring, like a pretty child, comes, she scatters her toys about. The pale primrose; the daffodils; the hawthorn; the emerald larches; the bronze-red buds of the scyamore; the golden patches of gorse;

sunshine and smiles for the Romany, Boswell, as well as for the 'Gorgio Rye.'"

"Yes," he admitted. "Our hearts are glad, and we praise the great spirit when spring comes. We——" He was interrupted by loud shouts from the front van. "It is the 'Romany Chi,'" said he, hurrying forward.

For a little while I was left alone with my own reflections, and had time to watch the passing pageant of colour in the skies; to see how it dressed the moors in borrowed garments of splendour. We passed a few huts, shelters for shepherds and gamekeepers, an aged road-mender at his work, a few cottages, whose occupants peeped through curtains at us with distrust plainly written on their features, then once more on to higher ground, more lonely, and more solitary than before. Then the vans suddenly stopped. I waited patiently, and Luke Boswell came up to me.

"We are stopping here," said he, "and we'll have supper in about half an hour. You will join us?"

"Good," said I. And stepping out on to the road proceeded to look out for a pasturage for Drummer; this was easily found.

There was a spring, too, where the Romany were filling their kettles. I unharnessed the horse, and, placing a loose halter upon him with his liberty line giving him a fair radius of feeding ground, I gave him his evening meal, and also looked after the wants of Con. I had scarcely finished washing when Luke Boswell came again for me, and together we walked to the front.

Although it was quite warm a fire had been lit under the lee of a sheltering rock, and from here pleasant odours were issuing.

A level patch of green was covered with plates, with knives and forks, cups and saucers, salt cellars, pepper boxes, and mustard pots. On one side another small patch of green was reserved as a sideboard, and here Mrs. Luke and the grandmother were busily employed in cutting up viands and placing them upon plates.

I had scarcely time to notice all this when I heard a musical girlish voice exclaim—

"How delightful! Now dearest, you are going to have a real gypsy supper, and you must not ask questions. You must simply close your eyes and——"

"See what God will send me," supplemented a man's voice.

I looked up and saw a girlish form dressed in modern garments. My professional eye took in the fact that she was graceful and fawn-like, but I was scarcely prepared for the beauty of her face, for, although her hair was dark and thick, with dark pencilled eyebrows, her face, beautiful in every feature, was fair as a delicate rose, tinted with colour on each cheek. Red lips enclosed a set of perfect teeth. The eyes, dark and lustrous, reigned over a lovely face of dazzling beauty. Swift and changeful expressions illuminated her features. I looked for the cause of all this concentrated charm, and found it in her eyes. It was not that they were dark, melting, and lustrous, but it was the love-light that triumphed there.

"This is the 'Gorgio Rye,'" said Ephraim, introducing me.

She held out her hand. I shook it gently, afraid to hurt so tender a palm. She looked at me very hard, and I stared at her in return. A retrospective dream passed over me. A vision of a little fairy who years ago had climbed on my shoulders, in those days the embodiment of artless and innocent guilelessness. I stared at her loveliness. She looked at me again.

"Excuse me," said she, in pretty accents, "but I thought I knew you."

I shook my head.

"I have never seen any one like you before," said I. Then Mrs. Luke ordered every one to sit down and partake of the evening meal. We did so. I do not know what I ate. I did not ask questions, but the memory of that meal and the happy surroundings has always haunted, will always haunt me, while I remain on this, God's earth.

CHAPTER V

A ROMANY FEAST

The meal-time was merry; the silent gypsies became loquacious; shafts of wit were thrust at each other, and repartee was formidable, judging from the screams of laughter which followed each rejoinder. This is assumption on my part, for I could not follow the Romany tongue. I was content, however, to watch the new beauty that had come upon us so suddenly. The witticisms, for the most part, were directed at her; she received them with sparkling eyes, with vivid tints of glowing colour over her face and neck, a living rose under a changing sky. The young gentleman who sat next to her, and opposite to me, was even more puzzled than myself, for he addressed me with the freedom of a table-d'hôte acquaintance.

"These people are having all the fun to themselves."

"Yes," I agreed, "and I am glad of it, for they don't appear to have too much of that virtue, as far as I can judge."

"Do you speak Romany?" he inquired, smiling.

"No," said I. "Only a few phrases, sufficient, like my French and German, to take me on my journey."

"I am supposed to know a little myself, but whenever I hear the real thing, by the real people, I don't understand a word of it."

Strong tea was now served out, and, under its influence, the talk became more lively still. The "Princess"—for so I assumed her to be—was now monopolising the attention of her companion, to whom she was endeavouring to translate the witticisms of her Romany friends. He, looking at her with adoring eyes, purposely tried to be stupid so that he indeed might have more of her for his own enjoyment. She appealed to me to confirm her belief in his stupidity, but I shook my head and avowed myself to be even a greater delinquent.

"Oh, I don't think so," she said, turning her dancing liquid eyes upon me. "You don't look a bit stupid. Uncle Ephraim tells me that you are a 'Rye Dron-manus' and a great 'Cooromengro' (boxer). They will be pleased at that, for they are very fond of it."

She imparted this information to her companion, who smiled and nodded his approval. I felt his scrutiny fixed upon me; then, after a short interval, he leaned forward and said—

"Pardon me, but have you ever lectured at Eton?"

"I have lectured at Windsor," said I, "when the Eton boys were present."

"I was sure of it," said he, holding out his hand. "I was there. We enjoyed it immensely. And do you still lecture?"

"Occasionally. I have one to-morrow evening."

"Really. And do you still illustrate them with those extraordinary feats of yours?"

"Yes," I admitted. "I call upon the physical to help me in my mental shortcomings."

Our further conversation was interrupted by loud shouts of "Gillie" (song), in response to which one of the younger men went to the van, returning with a concertina.

"We are in for it now," said our visitor, *sotto voce.*

I gave an answering grimace; but, after all, the music was not too bad, considering that the instrument was of the cheap kind, and wheezed occasionally. It was interesting to listen to the humming rhythm of their ditties, the words of which I did not understand.

The "Beauty" was now pestered with demands for a "Gillie," and, after vain attempts to escape, she gave us a quaint romance in a low, rich, musical voice, the gypsies joining vociferously in the chorus. The words were—

"Far down a valley lonely,
A place where Poets deem,
Fit for lovers only
When of love they dream:
There came a youth and maiden,
When snow was on the ground,
And every branch was laden
With glittering frost pearls round.

"Said he, 'By all above me,
My heart no change shall know,'
The words, 'I swear to love thee,'
He traced them in the snow.

(*Chorus*) "Heigh-ho! Heigh-ho! Heigh-ho!
It was ever so,
Lovers words were ever, ever traced in snow."

The applause was vehement, not to say

deafening, and calls were made for the next verse; but in response to a whispered entreaty from her companion, she did not comply. Then a shock came upon me. I was called upon for a "Gillie." I told them that they little knew the trouble they were making for themselves, as I was only called upon to sing when there was no instrument at hand to play "God Save the King"; my voice being considered quite capable of making any audience run helter-skelter out of any building. Then they turned to our visitor. He leaned forward to me.

"They don't get much pleasure," said he, "and my songs, such as they are, are too serious to give them any; but I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll croak a bit, if you will follow with some of those sword-feats of yours. That is the thing that will please them."

"I'm willing if you really think they would like it."

"I am sure of it," said he. He then sang in very pleasing style "The Songs of Araby." It was given without accompaniment, and the words seemed to appeal to the listeners, who nodded and grunted at the sentiments it conveyed.

I then rose and went to the van for my sword. I also brought the whimpering Con back with me, and handing him to the "Princess," asked if she would take care of him for a few minutes.

A flush of pleasure passed over her face, and Con, lucky dog! was in paradise for the next half-hour, so stroked and petted was he.

I handed round my sword for inspection, warning them of its keen edge, and it was amusing

to see their awe-stricken expressions as they gingerly touched the blade. The sword, I explained to them, was presented to me by the chief fencing instructor of the British Army, who had killed five men with it. It was in Afghanistan, where, wandering too far away from the camp, he became isolated, and then found himself attacked by a group of five Afghans. He was himself unarmed, but he knocked one Afghan down, and picked up the naked sword as it fell on the ground. He then made off with it, but in his service clothes he was no match for the lighter-clad tribesmen. He therefore stopped suddenly and ran his sword through the foremost of them, who happened to be the man he had knocked down. Then he made off again, hotly pursued by the remainder. He could hear the panting breath of one close upon him, and, turning suddenly, he ran him through. Once more he ran, quickly followed by the three remaining natives. Again he turned upon them, and felled one to the ground; then, with failing strength, he ran to a rock, placing his back against it, and, after a desperate fight, killed the last two. These facts were afterwards verified by soldiers from the camp.

"Now," said I, "this sword is very sharp. I will try and show you how sharp it is."

I first borrowed a dainty handkerchief from the "Princess," and, placing it over a raw potato, as I could not obtain any apples, I made a downward cut with the sword on to the handkerchief. When it was removed the potato was cut in halves, but the handkerchief, to their amazement,

was uninjured. I next cut a potato in halves with one downward cut, the potato resting upon the glass of my watch, without injury to the latter. Then I suspended by a cord a potato at the end of a stick held by Luke Boswell. With a horizontal cut I divided the cord, and, ere the potato reached the ground, had followed it with a downward cut severing it in halves. This I performed blindfolded, and, queerly enough, received no applause for the feat; but I saw that the gypsies were strangely impressed and perhaps a little amazed, and certainly for the rest of my stay with them they regarded me with some awe and absurd respect. I overheard Ephraim confiding to the "Princess" that all of these feats, including my boxing, had been taught me by a Romany, to wit, Jem Mace.

One other incident occurred worthy of mention. I heard the "Princess" inquiring from the Boswells the whereabouts of the Lawrences and Lovells. Now the former were great friends of mine, with whom I had frequently stayed during the long vacations, and, as my mind wandered back to those pleasant times, again I saw a vision of a fairy child clambering over me, using me as a horse or an elephant. The child was of startling beauty, and as I looked upon the "Princess" it flashed upon me that she indeed was none other than the once tiny but now grown-up fairy.

The visitors now rose, declaring that as they had a twelve-mile bicycle ride before them, they must depart at once; but there were loud and insistent cries for a dance, and to this they good-naturedly complied.

The green sward was instantly cleared of its crockery. The wheezing concertina was turned on, and in a few moments everybody and everything appeared to be in motion. Con barked furiously, and the louder barks of the chained mongrels added to the noise. The dance itself was evidently one peculiar to themselves: quaint, rough, noisy, but all-impelling, like a Morris dance gone mad, and accompanied by occasional wild whoops from everybody. At last, tired, excited, and with much laughter and smiles, they sank on the ground; a breathless lull ensued for a few moments, then once more the concertina made alarming sounds. The "Princess" approached me and inquired if I would have her as a partner.

"I dare not," I replied. "I have never seen such dancing before in my life."

She laughed. "Oh, this next dance will be quite civilised. It is to be a waltz."

"I'll do my best," said I; "but I have never danced with royalty before."

She smiled. "We will have to lift up our feet," said she, "or we will both come to grief."

We danced, but although we did not come to grief as anticipated, we were constantly in collision with the Romany, who danced regardless of direction, and as though the earth, this portion of it at least, was theirs.

I brought the "Princess" safely back to her companion, who had been dancing with Mrs. Luke Boswell, and whose smile, kept under subjection, suggested many surprises.

Then another wild oscillation was launched. The music and the dancers rivalled each other

in strange notes, twisting, reeling, curvetting, floundering; in vibration and motion, thrilling, infectious, intoxicating. Then Mrs. Luke bore away her charge to prepare for her journey, and her companion accompanied me to my van.

The Romany, however, kept up the excitement. Wild figures passed each other in rapid motion. The moon, which was rising, cast weird shadows on the ground, the concertina rasping, wheezing, squealing, and ever wailing out its fretful agony.

CHAPTER VI

PARTINGS ON THE HEATH

"I AM sorry you are going away so soon," said I to my visitor, as he finished his ablutions.

"We have left it as late as we dare. You see, my mother is staying at the hotel, and I must deliver up my charge to her before it gets too late. But the road is a good one, and we will do it under an hour. You've got a very nice van here."

"It is not mine," said I, and I explained my position in regard to it.

"Excellent," said he. "I hope to try it myself one of these days; but I'm not sure if I am strong enough to stand it at present."

I looked at him keenly. He was slightly built and younger than I first thought him to be, with pale, refined, aristocratic features, always lit up with a frank, open smile.

"I rather think it would help you, or any one else, to improve their health if they travelled during the summer or autumn."

"Yes, I dare say. Yes, I hope to try it some day. My fiancée would like it, I am sure; you know she is a gypsy, at least half a gypsy, herself, and has always been accustomed to a wandering life."

"She is very beautiful," said I, "and I heartily congratulate you; but there is little of the wanderer about her now, she appears practically perfect."

"Do you think so?" said he, laughing. "Well, she has been at a convent for the last two years. Ours is quite a romantic affair. I met her when she was quite a child, and conceived a boy's passion for her. I saw her afterwards at regular intervals; she was just a child of the road. Then I persuaded the powers that be that I was really in earnest, and we have had her educated, for one of these days she will occupy an important position, but I should be sorry to see all the elements of her nature stamped out by education; but she shows no signs of that, and every now and then we gratify her by allowing her to pay visits to her old friends. She is, as you say, very beautiful, not only in face but in her manner and nature."

"The finest pearl in the English crown," said I, "came from an oyster, and there is no reason why you should not have a perfect gem from the Romany."

"I think I have," he laughed.

We walked back to the vans. The "Princess" came forward and shook hands with me.

"It has been a great pleasure to meet you," said she, with a winning smile. "We will both remember it."

"Yes, indeed we will," added her companion, "and perhaps we shall have the pleasure of meeting you again some time."

I thanked them and wished them a pleasant

journey. They mounted their machines, and with a wild whoop from the gypsies speedily made their way westward. As they reached the bend in the road, they turned and waved their hands. The "Princess" giving a coo-ee call which the Romany answered with a loud shout.

"She was a 'Kosko Romany Chi,'" said old Ephraim, "and now she is a 'Kosko Gorgio Chi.'"

"The man is very good to her," said I, "and they appear very fond of each other."

"Yes," admitted Ephraim. "He is a 'Kosko Gorgio,' and will be kind to the Romany."

He inquired if Jem Mace taught me my sword feats.

"No," said I, much to his disappointment. "I was first inspired by reading about the English King Richard and the Arab Chief Saracen performing these feats. It is described in a book called 'The Talisman,' by the great writer, Sir Walter Scott. I practised them very laboriously, then, when I mastered them, I learnt other feats. It is easy work to me now."

"Jem Mace could do these things, I suppose?" said Ephraim.

"Possibly," said I, "and plenty of other things that I could not do."

Ephraim seemed pleased at my acknowledgment of the famous gypsy's prowess, and his face lighted up with a smile.

"The Romany," he said, "are a great people, and Jem was a great 'Cooromengro.'"

His wife now called him away, and as the

evening was drawing to a close I went to my van to look after the comfort of Drummer for the night. This over, I went inside to retire to rest.

The moon was partially hidden behind a cloud, but I could see the dark shadows of the gypsies as they moved through the intricacies of the moor, followed by their dogs.

I slept soundly, but in the morning had a confused recollection of shifting vans and other noises. Con barked furiously. Then came a rapping at my van. I sprang out of bed and opened the top half of the door.

"Good-bye, 'Gorgio Rye,'" said old Ephraim, holding out his hand.

"Good-bye, 'Cooromengro,'" said Luke Boswell, holding out his fist also.

"Good-bye, 'Romany Pals,'" said I, shaking hands with them, "and, Luke, don't forget the upper cut."

He laughed as they walked away. The moving wheels made a creaking, grating sound as they rolled away in the early mists of the morning, the sounds becoming fainter and fainter, until at last they had gone out of my hearing, and I was left alone.

It was rather early, but I had no inclination for further sleep, and, after washing, dressed myself to look after the wants of my crew. This I did to their apparent satisfaction, for it is wonderful to note how keen animals are, after a good rest, to be once more active and on the road.

We soon got under weigh, the road being good

and the air fresh and delightful. In a little time we came to the cross-roads where, by the marks of their wheels, the Romany had evidently turned north-west. Our route lay slightly to the south-west. The road for the first few miles was over a series of short, steep hills, which Drummer did not seem to mind, and after all, the ups and downs of life make better horses, as they make better men. These small troubles over, we got on to a very pleasant road, wide, spacious, with a good grass margin at either side, and apparently on the downward grade for some miles. It being rather early we met nothing except rabbits and other small game, who lopped and ran across our path, but later on we met two or three agricultural labourers going to their work, and shortly afterwards a couple of young ladies on bicycles, who smiled and wished me a camerada "Good morning" as they passed.

"What a blessing is the wheel," I pondered to myself, "whether it be bicycle, caravan, or motor car, for it enables us to reach regions in a day which would otherwise be denied to us."

A couple of miles more brought us to an ancient inn, the Traveller's Rest. I asked the landlord, who was at the door, if he could direct me to the Plough.

"Plough!" said he; "this inn is quite as good an' maybe better'n the Plough any day, an' if you want anything you can 'ave it 'ere."

"I will take your word for that," said I, "but we don't happen to want refreshments at present."

"Then, straight on," grumbled the landlord, "four miles from this door."

"Thank you," said I. "Good morning."

"Good mornin'," he growled, and turned indoors.

We met more people now—labourers, a couple of tramps, and a postman on his bicycle.

We pulled up at the Plough inside the hour. It was a pleasant, old-fashioned-looking inn with a swinging board overhead, upon which was painted the emblem of a plough in many colours. There was a porch which contained seats, the windows were diamond-paned, and adjoining there was a gate which evidently led to the rear of the house.

I went inside, arranged with the landlord, a pleasant-faced, middle-aged man, for the safe keeping of the horse, dog, and van for the remainder of the day, and possibly until the following morning, and having satisfied myself on this score, I drove the van through the gateway into the yard.

Then I made "some changes in my costume," as the ladies say, and having ascertained from the landlord that the railway station was but half a mile away, walked there and was fortunate enough to soon catch a train which took me to my destination.

Here I met many friends, including R. E. Thomas, England's ex-champion high jumper, and Mason Clarke, England's ex-champion amateur gymnast, who had charge of the meeting, and who reported that all was well. The hall was very crowded in the evening, owing to the fact that Mr. Herbert Gladstone, M.P. (Lord Gladstone)

presided, while the platform contained a good sprinkling of notables.

I was given a seat between Sir James Kitson (Lord Airedale) and the Very Rev. E. S. Talbot, D.D. (Bishop of Southwark), with the view of eliciting their sympathies with the physical training movement, and perhaps with the ulterior motive of obtaining a generous donation from Sir James Kitson. I did my best, exhausting my eloquence with them, and our hopes ran high when Sir James Kitson was called upon to speak. What he said was this—

"Ladies and gentlemen, I know Mr. Herbert Gladstone expects me to contribute £1000 to the objects of this meeting (cheers). Mr. Alexander has given me a vivid account of the workings of the society (hear, hear). He has explained the advantages, moral, spiritual, and physical, of recreation (cheers). Now I want to tell all the young men who are present here this evening, that if they want any physical recreation, which will confer upon them moral, spiritual, and physical benefits, all they have to do is to come to me (cheers)—to my forge, and I'll give them plenty of physical exercise there." (Laughter.)

This was disappointing, but the seed was evidently not cast on barren ground, for some months afterwards I received a note from Sir James, who wrote—

"An old lady has just died in these parts, leaving me a legacy of £2000 to do something for the benefit of young men. Now, I want you to tell me what I must do with it. It is a fearful nuisance," etc., etc.

For a moment I was tempted to ask for the money for our society, but finally I suggested that it should form a nucleus fund for the erection of an institute for the young men of his forge, and this I think has been done.

CHAPTER VII

WITH HOUSE-DWELLERS

At the termination of our public meeting the experts held a consultation to devise "ways and means." This was held under the auspices and hospitality of Walter Fennell, a well-known patriotic athlete, and who afterwards occupied the mayoral chair of Ripon for several years. Now, although this meeting was ostensibly held for practical purposes, yet, as often happens when healthy spirits assemble together, there was much extraneous matter introduced, and little business done. The subject discussed was National Characteristics, which was very interesting while it kept on a serious level, but some one suggested that Englishmen were noted for their poor appetites, Scotchmen for their extravagance, and Irishmen for their extreme modesty, while it was generally admitted that Welshmen had a good share of all of these virtues.

These views met with some sarcasm, and some of us tried to give the conversation a more practical turn, diagnosing the physical characteristics of our nationalities, and then endeavouring to analyse the natural results of these developments. After much talk these were placed in the following order. Englishmen, large waists; Welshmen, deep-

chested; Irishmen, long-limbed; and Scotchmen, large heads. It was argued that Englishmen developed their waists not only on account of their fondness for the dinner-table, but also by reason of their commercial proclivities, which gave them little time for anything else. It was held that Welshmen owed their large chests to their universal habit of singing and talking, that Irishmen owed their activities to their long limbs, and Scotchmen their large heads to their love of study. The subject was becoming interesting, and we were endeavouring to fix the result of these developments in its relation to the mind, when some one innocently asked who had the largest feet. This place of honour was unanimously, and with much enthusiasm, awarded to Scotchmen. A Scotchman, however, who was present, did not seem keen to accept the honour on behalf of his countrymen.

"How is it," asked he, "when a Dublin policeman gets a knock from a motor-car he never falls down?" and he looked triumphantly around. When it was urged upon him that the Dublin police contained many Scotchmen in its ranks, which would no doubt account for the phenomenon, he scowled at the suggestion, and averred that England and the Colonies and half the world were governed by Scotchmen.

"That is due," said a Yorkshireman who was present, "to your perseverance, not to your intelligence. Now," said he, looking around at us, "it is well known that Jews cannot earn a livelihood in Scotland, and it is equally true that Scotchmen cannot exist for any length of time in

Yorkshire. They leave our county and go elsewhere ; we are too much for them."

A mild Lancastrian here entered his protest. Said he, " What Lancashire thinks to-day, England thinks to-morrow." A statement which was much reviled.

When the meeting endeavoured to ascertain the financial economies of the Hebrew nation with its cause and effect, and their national distaste for physical exertion, one speaker remarked that their aversion to artisan labour was due to their superior knowledge of the laws of economy.

Our Scotch friend objected to this reasoning, and stated that no nation were so thrifty and economic as the natives of North Britain, and gave the following story in support of his contention. Two natives got married one morning in Glasgow, but were much perturbed as to where they should take their brides for their honeymoon. One proposed a ride on the tramcar, and the other suggested a walk in the suburbs. In a fit of generosity, however, they decided on the tramcar. When this was over Tam whispered to Jock, " Did ye pay your lassie's fare ? " Jock nodded his head mournfully. Then, after a pause, Jock whispered, " Did ye pay your lassie's fare, Tam ? " Tam nodded his head in smiling affirmative. " I dinna approve o' sic extravagance," said Jock severely. " Weel, Jock," said Tam, " it wass just this way. I borrowed saxpence fra the lassie and paid baith oor fares, and I've fourpence left for conteengencies."

The meeting decided that the Scotch delegate had proved his case. After an excellent supper

we broke up without coming to any very definite conclusions. It was very late, too late for me to get back to the caravan, I therefore accepted the hospitality of my old friend, R. E. Thomas, and his charming wife, to put me up for the night.

In the morning I had a taste of the tyranny of womankind, for pretty Miss Thomas, turning her parents out of the room, locked the door, then, jumping on to my knee, she placed her arm around my neck and said—

"Now we are alone, tell me a story."

It is sad to think that even at the early age of five years, the gentle sex give a forecast of that despotism which in after years forms one of their most powerful assets.

After parting with my friends I walked along the highway, a distance of six miles to the Plough Inn. On my way I stopped at a small country churchyard to pay homage at the grave of Smeaton, the great engineer and lighthouse builder. His grave is marked by a simple slab of stone, with a rudely-cut impression of a lighthouse upon it. Here I philosophised a little, wondering how it is that all of our great soldiers who have done so much to assist in the slaying of men, should have lofty monuments erected to their memory, while here was a man who had done, perhaps, more than any other single man to save life, who had only a simple slab of stone denoting his birth and death.

There were many quaint couplets, as there always are in old churchyards, referring to the past virtues of a bygone generation. In these modern days it seems to be the fashion to discontinue

this practice, which I think is to be regretted, for in these lines of wisdom there are many "sermons in stones" which are more convincing than many a polished oration from the pulpit.

After half an hour's brisk walk I reached the Plough Inn, where I received signs of recognition, mainly given by twisting of ears from Drummer, and a whimpering, boisterous welcome from Con, who seemed relieved to find himself once more in my company.

After a short chat with the landlord, and receiving some directions from him, I paid my bill, harnessed Drummer, and drew out on to the roadway. My way lay to the north-west, and proved an excellent bit of going, due, no doubt, to the rocky bed of the road, and the little wear and tear which its surface received.

I overtook a woman with several children who were tramping on the road. Each carried a small bundle. I asked the woman how far they were going. She mentioned a village about five miles away, and said that they had been walking all morning, and were very tired. I accordingly bundled them all into the van, much to their delight, and gave them some small refreshment. The woman told me that her husband had lately died, and after selling up her household goods she was making for her native village. She stated that this was her third day upon the road, and she appeared glad to be almost in sight of her home, where her aged mother lived.

"Aye, it's all reet," said she, "to get married an' 'ave childer an' a nice 'ome, but when t' mister goes all's different; all t' sunshine gets

knocked out o' ye. There's no money comin' in, an' when I go out workin' mesel' I'm that 'fraid o' summat 'appenin' to t' childer. It worries me to death, so I made up my mind to sell up an' go back to th' owd mother. Aye, an' she'll be glad to see us, never fear, that she will, an' she'll dote on t' childer an' look after 'em while I go out workin'. Aye, there's nowt like th' mother, after all."

I heartily agreed with her sentiments, and expressed my belief that there were very few men or women who could not, in after life, recall some instance of self-sacrifice and devotion on the part of their mother. I asked her if the children attended school.

"Yes," she said, "but they'll 'ave to go to t' Church school, there beant be no other in our village."

"Well," said I, "Church schools are very good schools. The children who attend them are taught to reverence and respect old age, which is more than can be said of some of the Council schools. What religion are you?"

"I'm Methody," said she, "but they 'ave no schools o' their own, so we're obliged to go to t' Church school, an', as you say, they are taught their manners, an' besides, their parson lives on t' spot, an' ye can go to 'im if you 'appen to be in trouble."

"Haven't you a minister of your own?" said I.

"Only a local. Our minister 'as three chapels to look after, with locals to 'elp 'im, an' 'e don't live in our village."

"Do the Methodists hold missions or revivals now?" I inquired.

"Yes, sometimes, an' each village gets a turn of it. It wur our turn last year." She commenced to smile, evidently at some reminiscence.

"What are you smiling at?" said I.

"It wur summat that Grannie wrote an' told me about when t' revival wur on last year. You know our chapel folk get very excited an' say all sorts o' queer things. Well, there wur a grand gentleman stayin' at the inn, an' just to show friendliness he went to t' revival meetin' an' were shown into t' pew wi' owd Betty Dawson, who were very excited at what t' preacher were sayin'. 'Cast out the devil,' he says, an' owd Betty groaned an' moaned. Then suddenly she jumps up an' ses, 'The devil is near me, I will cast 'im out,' and the gentleman that were in 'er pew got nervous, an' takes up 'is 'at an' rushes out o' t' door. O' course owd Betty didn't mean that 'e were t' devil."

"No," said I, "but I suppose he thought she did."

"Summat like it," she admitted, "but Gran'ma ses it's given rise to a lot o' scandal. Aye, 'ere's th' owd village coming in seet. There's owd Farmer 'Frogmortons'—I can never say 'is name properly; an' there, I declare! there's owd Charlotte. Aye, Charlotte, Charlotte, lass! dost t' know me?"

"Betty 'as 'ow be. An' what are t' doin' a gypsyin' in t' van? I heeard thi mister was dead. Be it true?"

"Aye, Charlotte, true enough, an' I've come

back to th' owd place again, to th' owd mother, an' this kind gentleman 'as given us a lift on our way; an' would you mind puttin' us down 'ere, sir," she said; "we're just on th' edge o' t' village, an' I want to talk to Charlotte, an' thank you kindly, sir, for all your kindness."

I discharged my cargo, and wishing them all good luck, went on my way, with the voluble thanks of Betty and the smiling looks of Charlotte following me.

CHAPTER VIII

A QUAINT VILLAGE

I PASSED through the quiet village, as usual an object of interest to the inhabitants, and who can blame them for coming to their doors and staring at any fresh object which may tend to break the monotony of their lives.

The light green of the corn, and the darker green of the oats, accompanied me right and left for some miles, then root crops, and small plantations noisy with the incessant cawing of rooks; how wisely these birds build their base of operations within striking distance of food supplies, worms, and corn which was to come! My eyes, too, were refreshed by the silent flowing of a river on my left.

In my fancy I beheld it growing from the tiny rivulet of the distant hills, playing like a child amidst the intricacies of gorse and bracken; bounding like a boy from boulder to boulder; dashing over sharp declivities in youthful exuberance; entering upon the river with the soberness of man, until freed of all restraint it rushed out to battle in the great ocean of life.

I was now on a road with fields on either side rich in verdure, good crops, and well-cut hedges, with neat stone cottages swept over with trailing

roses foreshadowing a good landlord, and this I found to be the case, for a pretty lodge soon came into view. Through the iron gates I saw an avenue of tall chestnuts, at the end a terraced lawn upon which rested a quaint priory-looking house. Passing this I came upon more cottages with happy children playing at their doors, and wondered to myself whether this state of things could be improved if our socialist friends were in power. I compared this environment with others that I had seen in socialistic countries, and felt satisfied that we English were well off, and, if we thought otherwise, we should have the opportunity to travel given to us; then by comparison, we would feel assured and content in our free, peaceful life, having a friend in our landlord, and with every opportunity to improve our lot if we so desired.

I came at last to the foot of the hills, and rested Drummer for a few minutes before he undertook his task.

"Come out, Con," said I to the dog, "let us walk. Every ounce will make it lighter for Drummer."

"Wise, very wise," he yapped back; "at every hill we should get down and walk and lighten poor Drummer's load, then I could scamper, squeeze through hedges, and play about." He barked his joy at me, and made off a little in advance.

On the first rise I overtook a tall, weather-beaten old man who was surmounting the hill in a remarkable way. He held in either hand a stout stick about the same height as himself—six feet or thereabouts. He leaned forward, his hands

high up the stick, seeming to climb the hills with his hands in addition to walking with his feet.

"Well," said I to him, "you are climbing as well as walking, I see."

"Yes," said he, with a little gasp of breath. "I do it every day. I go to t' village for t' paper, to read t' news."

"What age are you ?" said I.

"Seventy-nine," said he, stopping and straightening himself up.

"You don't look it," said I. "Are you a farmer ?"

"Retired," said he, joining in the walk again. "I've worked hard, mister, in my time, an' now I'm too old an' am living wi' t' daughter an' son-i'-law at t' foot o' th' hill."

"I suppose you have lived here all your life ?"

"Yea, nearly so. Here an' a bit further north, but my forbears, they coom fra Ireland." He smiled quizzically at me. "I'm descended from th' old kings of Ireland, so fowks tell me."

"What is your name ?" said I.

He stopped again, once more straightening himself up.

"Brodrick," said he, "that's my name."

"Well," said I, "there are Brodricks in Ireland. It is the family name of Lord Midleton; they live at the Grange, Midleton, in County Cork. I have been in Midleton."

He stopped again and looked at me curiously.

"Have you now ?" said he. "Well, that's a great thing, to 'ave been at th' 'ome o' the Brodricks. An' what kind of a place may it be ?"

"It is a fine old place," said I, "but I do not

know the present Brodrick, except that he is a useful and patriotic man."

"Well, that's summat," said he, "as long as they're goin' on well, that's all what's wanted."

We had arrived at the top, a broad plateau of wild moorland with rising reaches of gorse, bracken, and heather on our right, with cultivated patches of green in their midst denoting a golf course upon which two or three couples were now playing; on the left, a sloping valley of gorse and heather, a river at its base, and rich crops of golden cereals on its banks. Drummer, as usual, had done his work well.

"Well, how 'igh do you think we are now?" said Mr. Brodrick.

"I cannot say, but it is very good air."

"You're five 'undred feet," said he impressively, "an' seven miles away, you're a thousand feet up, an' fifteen miles away you're eighteen 'undred feet up."

"I shall be content with five hundred at present," said I, "and I am sure my horse will."

Mr. Brodrick smiled. "Good day," said he, and without more ado moved off rapidly, with the aid of his two long sticks.

After having given Drummer a breather, we resumed our journey along a fairly level road, and soon came to the margin of a village. We passed a wheelwright's forge; outside there was an old wooden seat, and upon this sat Mr. Brodrick with several old cronies engaged in hot debate. He nodded graciously to me as became a descendant of the old kings of Ireland, and I, as in duty bound, saluted him gravely.

A turn in the road took us into the village, a jumble of old buildings—quaint shops; a village cross; stocks; a drinking trough; and stone steps which enabled our grandmothers to mount their palfreys; an ancient church; numerous openings and alleys, upwards and downwards, and on the level, a typical moor village, every feature of which was a study, and almost every inhabitant a character. My main object in calling there was to visit an old friend of mine, Mr. F——, who, with his two charming daughters, lived in an old-fashioned house in the centre of the village.

The caravan soon became an object of interest as I steered my way to the old inn and safely lodged the van in its yard. Here I made arrangements with the landlord and ostler for the welfare of Drummer, and having locked up Con in the van, proceeded to do a little shopping ere I called upon my friends.

I first visited the baker, who said his "batch wouldn't be turned out for a couple o' 'ours yet."

The fruiterer's and greengrocer's shop was locked up, with a notice outside to the effect that the proprietor had gone to Blackpool for a holiday. The fishmonger's shop, too, was locked up, a paper fastened on to the door had these words written upon it: "Doing a funeral." I afterwards ascertained that the fishmonger united the trade of an undertaker, which accounted for his absence.

Under these adverse circumstances I called upon my friend, Mr. F——, tall, burly, with a strange resemblance to King Edward. He gave me a very hearty welcome, as did the young ladies. Kind hospitality was forced upon me, and

during that evening I, like Othello, recounted my adventures.

I rescued Con from his loneliness, and he shared in my good luck.

How delightful it is after a lonely pilgrimage to fall in with friends whom you feel are sincere, who will give you a corner seat at their fireside, bring slippers to you, and bustle about with the tea-things!

Such was my good fortune now. Mr. F—— and his family were full of common sense, and it was a pleasure to listen to their intelligent reasoning; he, however, had one little peculiarity, this was his proclivity for things agricultural, and when the evening paper came, and he inquired from me if I would like to hear the news, I thanked him and answered in the affirmative, whereupon he discoursed with much enthusiasm upon the prices of heifers, bulls, sheep, horses, and fat pigs.

Con was a great pet, and the ladies made much of him. They also saw to the provisioning of my van for me, and, moreover, insisted that Con and I should stay the night at their house.

"I hope," said the ladies, "the village clock will not disturb you to-night. It has been striking quite erratic lately, and we can't get it put right. I don't believe our clock-repairer, who is also our shoemaker, knows enough about it."

Certainly I was disturbed that night. At twelve o'clock, after a display of sounds resembling a railway shunting, it struck fifteen. At one o'clock it went on striking. I counted over one hundred; then windows were thrown up, night-capped heads were thrust out, and arguments

ensued as to what was the matter with "her." Then a female voice, sharp and shrill, disowned the feminine appellation. In the meantime the clock went on, and sleep was impossible.

"Joe," said a voice, "we mun get dahn an' do summat t' 't." They and others got down, bringing a ladder from somewhere, but the clock would not stop. "Tak' t' fire 'ose t' it," said one, "we canno' be kep' wakken all t' neet." "I canno' get t' t' pendulum," complained a voice at the top of the ladder. "Bring t' skewer or long pipe an' I'll put it through th' hoil."

There was a scuffling of feet below, a little lapse of time, more talking, more striking, then the shuffling feet returned, the skewer and long pipe were handed up to the craftsman at the top of the ladder. There was a grating noise, a grunting mechanical protest, and the striking finished. The group of men below congratulated themselves upon their skill.

"Well, we've done that job all reet," said one.

"Aye," said another, "an' I feel thirsty ower it. I wish th' owd inn were oppen."

CHAPTER IX

A SURPRISE MEETING

At the breakfast table next morning there was some vivacious talk about the town clock, about the eccentricities of the inhabitants, and, in particular, of the greengrocer, who that morning had returned from his annual holiday at Blackpool, and as I heard that he had got a new stock in, I resolved to pay him a visit, to purchase a few things for the caravan. He was a short, broad, stubbly man of surly aspect, who parted with his goods as though he were conferring a favour, and accepted payment in the same spirit. There was a young woman in the shop when I arrived whom he was treating with scant courtesy, but who appeared to understand and humour him.

As she took her departure he blinked at me and jerked his head at the departing female.

"Roses afore marriage, an' snap-dragons after," he growled. "Now, sir, what can I do for you ?"

"You appear to have some nice roses there," said I. "I think I'll have a few."

"Roses are alreet, but cucumbers do you more good, an' I've some good uns 'ere. Lave t' roses t' lasses an' silly young lads, that's what I say; fools as will pay anythin' for 'em 'cause the're in 't love state—silly fools!"

"Well," said I, "I'm in love with the roses, so I'll have a few."

"Tuppence each," he jerked out.

"And I think I'll have a couple of cucumbers; they appear nice."

"I've growed 'em mesel'. Fourpence, sixpence, eightpence." He placed three specimens before me. I purchased two of the latter and admired their symmetry.

"There's a lot o' knowledge wanted to grow cucumbers properly. Some folk stick 'em in glass frames an' lave 'em to their fate. I don't. I considers 'em. If they don't be doin' well I shifts 'em to another part o' t' garden; humours 'em; gives 'em a holiday; aye, but the're like females when you thinks abaht it——"

"I'll have a few red currants," said I.

"Sixpence," said he. "Best in t' county."

"How much is that?" said I.

"Roses, shillin'. Cucumber, one an' four. Currans, sixpence—Two an' tenpence." I paid him the money, which he accepted without comment.

"Good morning," said I.

"Mornin'," he answered gruffly.

I went to the inn, paid up, and harnessed Drummer to his burden, and then drew out on to the roadway. The inhabitants were all abroad now, and appeared to be hurling pleasantries at each other. The women, arms akimbo or folded across their breasts, threw shafts of wit at the men folk as they passed by; these rarely ventured on repartee, but, like modern martyrs, grinned and bore it.

"Tha'rt walkin' to thi wark, Stephen," said one woman to a man as he passed, "like a snail or a caterpillar, but when tha finishes tha'rt like a man runnin' a race."

This gibe was hailed with laughter by the woman's confederates, and the man increased his pace a bit, not in enthusiasm for his work, but to be out of the reach of the lady's tongue.

Nor did I escape, for criticisms were launched at me which I happily did not understand. I therefore passed on, calling at the F——'s to say good-bye, and to thank them for the true hospitality they had so generously shown me. Then, leading Drummer slowly by the head to prevent calamity amongst children and dogs, soon reached the edge of the village.

For a little time the road was level, then there was a long descent, necessitating the "skid"; another level road, passing occasional mills with their busy hum of machinery, and across bridges where rushing waters were falling fiercely over the weirs. Then began rises again, hills of two or three hundred feet high, but none very steep. Then I called a halt, studied my road map, and took a sharp turn to the right, going due west. It was a beautiful old country road, small coverts and deep woods displacing the green of the irregular hedges, now emblazoned with bramble, rose, and traveller's joy. At the foot of the hedgerows wild weeds. The golden ragwort, crimson spires of loosestrife, and blue chicory made jewels in colour for the passer-by. It was not surprising in this atmosphere of colour and sunshine, that I inadvertently spied a pair of youthful

lovers travelling a narrow path along the hedge-rows which divided the fields. They had come to a stile, and he, true to the tradition of his race, was exacting toll for assisting her over this very formidable, not to say dangerous, pass. He had placed his arm round her, drawn her to him, and after a brief struggle she, rosy red, had given her payment. I came from the hedge over which, from a hillock, I had witnessed the incident, and went to the head of Drummer. When the pair came out on to the road and saw us, they still held each other's hand; he valiant, she demure, smiling and nodding at me as they passed along.

Happy youth! Happy maiden! Long may you live to enjoy your innocent bliss; kiss while you may, for time may make changes that ye wist not of. I called to mind the various types of kissing I had seen in travels over many lands, and am glad that England owns its true and pure essence. Old England, where the babes receive, where youth steals, and where, alas! old age is fain to buy these symbols of happiness.

I suddenly came upon a village and was about to inquire my way at a cottage, when a chubby-faced clergyman rushed out of it and came towards me.

"Hello!" said he.

"Hello!" said I.

"Fancy meeting you here," said we both in a jumble.

"Whatever are you doing in that van?"

"Enjoying life, my friend; and what are you doing here?"

"Why, this is my parish. Come along, you

are not going any further to-day. Come to the Vicarage, and put up that van at the inn; they'll stable the horse for you."

"I'm not sure," said I doubtfully, "if I've done my quota of miles. I'm supposed to do twenty a day, but I can only have done fifteen."

"Then do twenty-five to-morrow. Come along now, no excuses."

I resigned myself to fate, and to my parson friend, whom I had not seen for many years. We went to the inn and fixed up with the landlord; then, taking Con with us, made for the Vicarage, a pleasant house alongside a pretty spired church.

He was a bachelor, and was looked after by an elderly housekeeper, with a rosy-faced country girl to help her.

"Dinner at six-thirty," said he; "will that suit you?"

I nodded. In two or three minutes, however, we were taking tea and talking like gossips. He told me of his parish; I spoke to him of my itinerancy.

"It is a capital plan," said he, "to combine business with pleasure. I wish my villagers could hear one of your lectures, it would be quite a treat for them. We live so far away from any town."

"I am at your service," said I. "If you think I won't bore them, but I must be away early in the morning, as I have my plans mapped out. But where would you get the audience from? This seems a small village."

"Oh, we'll get plenty of people. My parish has a radius of four miles, and includes an

engine-repairing works on the railway; there are plenty of men there. Excuse me for a minute."

He went out. In a few minutes he returned.

"I've sent a boy on a bicycle to the engine works and around the parish. We'll have a crowd, never fear."

The schoolroom was indeed packed that evening, babes and women, boys and men.

After an inordinate and almost mendacious introduction from the chairman, I gave them my sermon, and was lucky enough to interest the men by declaring that we were all human engines, having furnaces, boilers, cranks, and wheels, the same as any mechanical engine, with an engine-driver in our brains to control our movements. Told them how governments and trusts were like traction engines; that man himself resembled the old steam engine, puffing and groaning all day long, sometimes getting out of repair, and always requiring plenty to eat and drink. Told them that woman was the new oil engine, fast threatening the supremacy of the steam engine; capital was the electric engine, which did wonders by touching the button; soldiers were fire engines; sailors, hydraulic engines; slackers, horizontal engines; politicians, gas engines. These comparisons created amusement.

"What abaht they single men, them bachelors?" shouted a woman's voice from the audience.

"They," said I, "are donkey engines, not so useful as other engines," a reply which evoked much merriment. I then went into details of the human engine; illustrating the control of the mind over the body with some sword feats. I

called for a volunteer from the audience to kneel down, allow me to place a potato on the back of his neck, which I proposed to cut in halves with one downward stroke of the sword. There was a pause. I invited the reverend chairman, but he shook his head, not wishing to present himself in Paradise at such short notice.

Then a middle-aged man came forward and knelt. I placed a potato on the back of his neck, raised my sword, but just as I was bringing it down with estimated force, the Vicar rushed off his chair and shouted "Don't!" in an excited manner. It was a critical moment, but unheeding the interruption, I completed my task.

The lecture seemed to give pleasure, and I received a vote of thanks from two burly speakers in the audience.

As we returned to the Vicarage the Vicar was profuse in his apologies for his interruption.

"You see," he added, "it was my churchwarden, and he contributes very largely to our funds."

CHAPTER X

THE PEDLARS

"Now," said my host, over supper, "what do you consider the greatest physical virtue?"

"Speed," said I, shortly.

"Really! I would not have thought so. I should have said strength or endurance."

"Strength and endurance are good companions, but they should have a good brother to dominate them, who should be called speed. In mind, body, or estate, if we wish for success we must have speed as the controlling virtue. In warfare it is the quickest bolt, the speediest bullet, that wins; in boxing the quick knock-out. Speed gains the victor's crown in the race. The alert mind scores in business. In humanity we must be quick to see misery, and quick to alleviate it. Wireless and telegraph are rapid transits, and the flight of angels is speed typified. Slowness belongs to things material, to government departments, to——"

"My dear fellow! You take my breath away. What about the British character? Does it represent speed? I think if you lived in this village for a time you would modify your opinion about speed."

"No doubt; but I am not speaking of this

village. I am speaking generally of the Universe, always involved in illimitable speed. As for our own world, America owes its greatness to its alertness, so does France and Germany. We British, were it not for our Celtic and Gaelic influences, would be a slow and degenerate people."

He laughed. "I don't think speed would do in the pulpit," said he.

"No," said I; "slowth of speech and rapidity of thought, are the companions-in-arms for the pulpit."

"I find it difficult," said he, "to awaken the interest of my parishioners, whatever I say to them. I wonder what kind of a parson you would make?" and he looked at me doubtfully.

"A very bad one," said I, "for I should try to introduce innovations which would result in my overthrow."

In the early morning, after an excellent breakfast, I went to the inn, and when I brought up the van for my friend's inspection he became enthusiastic, admiring its apple-green colour; the white-edged windows; the dainty curtains; the bedroom with its tiny lavatory; the dining-room in the centre with its cheerful cooking-stove and box seats and the lounge at the front with more box seats, capable of being converted into an extra bed.

"I wish I were going with you," said he. "It seems freedom typified, and with two such jolly companions, why, you are a man to be envied; but, I say, you haven't got much speed in the shafts, have you?"

"No," said I, "it is strength and endurance—

very necessary virtues; but I shall have to make speed myself, or be behind time."

We parted with mutual regret. G—— is a fine fellow, doing excellent work in his secluded parish.

For some considerable time we moved along a fairly high plateau with stunted growth of trees and other vegetation. The air was exhilarating, and stimulated Drummer to effort. Con and I walked alongside him, and had to hurry ourselves in order to keep pace with him.

We continued in this cheerful way for several miles, then came to a small hamlet containing a church, an inn, a blacksmith's forge, one small shop, and about twenty houses. Passing through, I came outside the village to a small cottage, in the window of which was a card with the legend inscribed: "Hair-cutting and shaving." "Here is a chance," thought I, "of a quiet shave," of which I stood much in need, and as the place looked neat and clean, I stopped the van and knocked at the door. I took a hasty glance around, as the door was opened by a young woman comely and pleasant to look at.

"Do you shave here?" I inquired.

"Yes," said she. "Will you sit down?"

I sat down and waited for the barber. The young woman passed, very deftly, a towel around my neck. "A useful daughter," thought I; "preparing the preliminaries for her father." This opinion was emphasised when the comely maiden commenced to lather me. I was about to pass the remark, "you are very useful to your father," when an extra dab on the chin rendered

speech imprudent. The lady actually sharpened the razor on the strop in quite a professional manner. I tried to screw round to see where the pater was, but she seized upon me, and ere I knew it, was performing prodigies of skill upon my face; tossing my head from side to side, leaning it at this and that angle, pulling the chin down, then up. I was about to remonstrate when another dab made speech unthinkable. She took great liberties with my face, twisting and curving it as it had never been twisted or curved before. Then she sponged me, dried me, and said, "Twopence." I paid up.

"Have you many customers?" said I.

"Aye, but not many at this time."

"Where did you learn your work?" said I.

"Feyther learned me."

"Well," said I, "you're a marvel."

She smiled complacently.

"Good morning," said I.

"Good mornin'," said she, pleasantly.

When I got back to the van and peered in the small mirror, it looked as though I was in for an attack of scarlet fever. It was the first time I had been shaved by a woman.

We made good progress during the afternoon, for the road was excellent, and, taking advantage of this fact, I determined to make up the few miles which I had dropped from my daily schedule on the previous day. After getting a little way from the village, the road became lonely, and I met no one, contenting myself with watching the antics of a yellow-hammer, who persistently kept about forty yards in front of us, invariably resting on the

tallest branch of the thorn hedge, and never failing to sing his "Little bit of bread and no che-e-ese." When at last we came to a cross-road he finished his escort, apparently returning to his nest.

A couple of cyclists, heads down, whizzed by from the right to the left. They appeared to be on the main road going south-west. I suppose I ought to have followed the same direction, but across it there was a continuation of the road I was already upon, and, consulting my map, I found it went in practically the same direction, and, indeed, looked somewhat shorter. I therefore continued my way along it. It was a desolate highway, overgrown with grass and weeds, showing that little traffic went over it, and I only hoped that I had made no mistake in coming along it. As there appeared to be no habitations about I went on slowly, intending to camp when a suitable place presented itself.

I could give no explanation, but every now and then I found myself instinctively stopping still and listening intently. I could hear nothing definite, and therefore stopped the van for a moment and listened again.

In a little time, when the wind beat slightly against my face, I again heard the noise. They were human sounds, and this time I heard a woman's scream. I hastened on Drummer, and soon, in the distance, saw the smoke of a fire. As the screams proceeded I urged Drummer to a trot, and in two or three minutes saw on the roadside a fire, close to which was a travelling pedlar's van; the horse was out of the shafts and was feeding

on the grass. The man had evidently been ill-using the woman, for she still cowered at his feet; he, standing upright in an aggressive attitude over her, was about to strike her again. The sound of Drummer's hoofs caused him to desist and look up. He came into the roadway, while the woman continued her wailing and weeping. The man was of the middle size, with "Brute" written on every feature of his face.

"Hello!" said I. "What are you doing to that woman?"

"Get on," said he, "and mind your own business."

"I am a 'special'" said I, "and want to know what you mean by ill-using that woman."

"Special wot?" he jeered. "Where's yer authority?"

"Don't you know," said I, "that it is the duty of all loyal subjects of our king and country to act as special constables when required? Now, if that woman lodges a complaint against you, I'll take you in charge and hand you over to the police, for I was a witness of the ill-treatment."

"Please don't, gentleman," said the woman, sobbing. "He's my husband an' 'as a right to beat me if he wants, although I never deserves it." And she commenced to cry again.

The man moved sullenly off to his van and disappeared inside. The woman rose slowly and followed him. I prepared camp for the night. As there was plenty of grass about, I unharnessed Drummer, placed the free halter on him, and then, attaching the liberty line to it, tied the other end to the spokes of the wheel. I then prepared supper,

attending to the wants of Drummer first. After supper I looked out through the upper half of my doorway at the pedlar's van. It stood about thirty yards in advance of my own. Everything was quiet, and, as the evening was closing in, I lit my lamp and read a little. Con had already stepped into his bed, and the heavy breathing of Drummer told me that he too was deep in slumber. I therefore followed their example, and was soon dreaming about the events of the night. I saw a man with arms like windsails beating down a weak, helpless woman, she crying for mercy. I called on him to stop, but he persisted, and the woman herself turned upon me, upbraiding me for my interference. The dream was so realistic, that I woke up and listened intently. Con was uneasy, growling in his sleep, and Drummer—I could not hear Drummer! I listened keenly for his breathing, then not hearing it, I got up, went quickly to the door and looked out. It was early dawn. The pedlar's van had disappeared, and Drummer, he was not there. I sprang out into the roadway as I was and rushed to his liberty line. Yes, he had disappeared—the line was lying loose upon the ground. For a moment I was beside myself with wrath. I looked about in all directions. There was no sign of him, or of the pedlars. I ran into the van and hastily dressed, my mind in a ferment.

CHAPTER XI

THE HORSE STEALERS

Locking up Con in the caravan, I ran to where the pedlar's van had stood and examined its wheel tracks. I could distinguish, too, the heavy impressions of Drummer's hoofs, which confirmed me in the belief that they had stolen him. To make positive, however, I climbed the only tree in the neighbourhood, a solitary mountain ash, and looked searchingly around, but could see nothing of the missing horse ; I decided, therefore, to follow the train of the wheel marks, and at once set off in an easy trot which I felt I could keep up for a few miles, looking in every direction as I went along. There was, after I had covered about a mile, a cart track to the right, but as there were no wheel marks there, I pressed on my way, evolving in my mind, as I went along, the cause and object of the outrage, and concluded that it could only be that of revenge and greed ; revenge for my interference, and, perhaps, by disposing of the horse to some farmer at a low figure, to make a few pounds and then disappear. At the end of a couple of miles I noted a small farm a field or two away from the road, and decided that I would make some inquiries there. I therefore opened the gate, passed through and ran up to

the house. I knocked at the door, but was only answered by the furious barking of a dog. I continued to knock, however, and, after a short interval, a window casement was violently opened above me and a head in a night-cap was thrust through. It was that of a middle-aged man whose face was unshaven and forbidding-looking. He gave me a suspicious look and roughly demanded my business.

"I am sorry I have awakened you, sir," said I, "but my horse, belonging to my caravan, has been stolen by pedlars, and I wondered whether you have seen anything of them, or noticed the animal, a fine-looking dark bay."

The man looked at me angrily.

"How dost ta think I know owt abaht it? Get on thi way, me lad, an' doant wakken up respectable fowk i' this fashion." He withdrew his head and closed the window with a bang.

I ran again to the road, lamenting the loss of time the delay had caused me. The marks of wheels were yet distinct on the moisture of the early morning, plainly imprinted on the old dust-covered, neglected road. I was now getting into my stride, and felt that I must soon come up with my quarry, for judging from the appearance of the miserable horse I had noticed on the preceding evening, it could do little better than a walking pace with the van and its impedimenta. When, however, I came to a cottage at the left-hand side of the road, I thought it best to again make inquiries. My knock at the door was once more answered by the loud barking of a dog, and again a casement window was thrown open, and

a head, this time that of an elderly woman, was thrust through.

"Have you seen or heard a pedlar's van pass along this way during the night?" I asked.

The woman appeared unable to collect her senses for a few moments. Eventually she called out—

"No, I haven't. I've been abed since nine o clock, an' 'ave seen nowt."

"Have you heard anything?" I urged.

"Well, now that I be thinkin', I may 'ave 'eard summat i' t' neet, either that or I wor dreamin'. Now that's all I can tell thee, tha'd better be gettin' on," and she too closed the window with impatience.

I breasted forward, increasing my speed a little to make up for my lost time, looking keenly in every direction and following the wheel tracks like a sleuth hound, but look as I would, I could see no sign of the runaway pedlars, and then I commenced to get perturbed. It was not exactly the loss of the horse that was troubling me, for I had already insured the animal for fifty pounds, that being the value that the farmer had placed upon it, but I had conceived a liking for Drummer, and was loth that he should suffer from any action of mine. The incident would also sadly interfere with my plans, for I had now mapped out my route carefully, and had an important engagement in three days' time, and to be stranded forty miles away on a lonely, deserted country road, with a van that did not belong to me, and without a horse, was too much for my philosophy, and I blazed with indignation.

At length I saw in the distance an object in the roadway which might possibly be the van. It was in the act of turning to the right, and the morning sun glinting on the off-side of the van, betrayed its presence to me.

The driver, whoever it was, had also discovered me, and, lashing the horse, urged it to flight. The animal did not respond, patiently enduring the lashes. In a few moments, panting and breathing hard, I was upon them.

"Stop," said I. "Stop."

I ran to the horse's head, compelling it to stop. The woman who was driving struck wildly at me with the whip. I seized it, and pulling it from her hand, threw it away. She at once commenced to weep.

"Where is my horse?" I demanded.

"I knows nothin' about yer 'orse," she mumbled in cringing tones.

"Don't lie," said I. "I can tell you are lying from your manner. Now tell me where is the horse or I will take you in custody, and you'll be thrown into prison."

"I don't know where the 'orse is," she reiterated, sobbing afresh. "It ain't 'ere you can see for yerself."

"Where is your husband?" I demanded. "Wake him up; tell him I want him."

"'E ain't 'ere neither," she sobbed.

"Where has he taken the horse?" said I angrily; "tell me quickly, or I'll take you all off into custody."

"Dear, dear," she cried, "why was I ever born? It's trouble every day, an' it's not worth livin'."

"I am sorry for you," said I, "but I am not sorry for your husband, who is a bad lot, and deserves punishing. Now tell me where he has taken my horse to, and I'll let you off this time."

Her face brightened a little.

"Yer won't say as I told yer?" she pleaded.

"No," said I, "but you must tell me the truth, or it will be the worse for you."

I took the name and address of her licence.

"Now," said I, "speak the truth. Out with it!"

"Well," she said, with a heavy sigh, "'e's 'iding it in the old quarry, an' I've to meet 'im to-night at the top o' this road, an' then we're to travel again in the night until 'e meets with the gypsies, an' then 'e'll sell the 'orse."

"What is the name of the gypsies?" I asked sharply.

"Their name be Boswells, but they be a long way from 'ere."

"Now, tell me," said I, "where is this old quarry you speak of?"

"It's a mile or two from where we stopped last night, on the left 'and goin' back. You'll find 'im there, gentleman, but don't 'urt 'im, an' don't tell 'im I told yer. 'E'd kill me, 'e would, fer sure."

"Now," said I, "I've taken your name and number of your licence, and if I find you have not spoken the truth I will send out detectives after you and punish you as you deserve."

"It's the truth, gentleman, I've told ye," said she, commencing to cry afresh.

I left her and retraced my steps. The news

stimulated me to fresh effort. The place indicated by the woman must have been the cart track that I had noticed a little distance from the caravan. What a pity I had not examined it! The thought that the fellow might still elude me gave me fresh anxiety, and increased my speed until at last I was rewarded by the appearance of the track. I approached warily, hoping to come upon the man by surprise.

As I turned down the lane I listened. I could hear nothing, and proceeded cautiously for about fifty yards, noticing with delight the hoof marks of a horse at intervals. Then the road suddenly turned into the top, stony cartway of a quarry, terribly steep on the right, the margin treacherously hidden with wild bramble bushes.

There was an awful silence as I made my way down the zigzag road of the old deserted quarry. Suddenly I started as a piece of heavy rock crashed at my feet. I looked up; on a bypath, about twenty feet above where I was, the pedlar stood grinning maliciously at me. I ran up the side-path towards him. He held a piece of rock in each hand with which he tried to club me. I anticipated his assault, and giving him one in the stomach, doubled him up. As he fell I gave him another on the chin which must have caused him some reflection. The stones dropped helplessly, like himself, to the ground. I seized him by the neck and nearly choked him.

"It would take very little," said I, "for me to throw you over into the quarry below. It would prevent any more thieving, any more cruelty from you."

"No, no," he groaned feebly, "I'll never do it again;" and he cursed horribly, protesting against his ill-luck. "I'll turn over a new leaf, I will. I will, for sure."

I saw that mercy to such a man was of little use, nevertheless the picture of the unfortunate woman whom he called his wife, weighed heavily against my inclination to use violence.

"Get up," said I, giving him a kick. "Take me to the horse."

He rose. I seized him by the arm. When we were on the zigzag path he tried his strength against me, but I held him safely, and he howled at the vice-like grip I had upon him. Watching him warily we reached the bottom, and there, to my delight, was Drummer drinking from the rain-holes in the rocks.

CHAPTER XII

MERRY TRAVELLERS

I WAS so overjoyed at the appearance of Drummer, whom I patted and rubbed on the nose for some time, that I scarcely noticed the pedlar, who now was making off. I ran forward and intercepted him.

"Steady," said I, "don't be in a hurry. Don't forget that you were guilty of horse stealing, and that the punishment is transportation, and used to be hanging, which no doubt you deserve. Now come along with us."

I took him, roughly enough, by the arm and together with Drummer, mounted the zigzag cartway out of the old quarry. My prisoner did not speak, contenting himself with whining and moaning as though the last spark of life was leaving his body. When we got to the main road he sank all of a heap on its surface.

"Aye, mister," he moaned, "you are cruel, an' no mistake; I've never met any one so cruel afore, I 'aven't, blimey if I 'ave."

"Cruel, am I?" said I, stopping short and looking savagely at him. "How do you make that out?"

"Why," said he, "you're a strong chap, 'an 'andy with yer fists, an' you knocks a poor chap

about like me ; a weak chap as ain't 'alf as strong as you, an' who's now sorry fer taking the 'orse. It were a temptation that were. Ses I to myself, 'That gentleman's got plenty of money. I'll nab 'is 'orse an' sell it to the Boswells fer twenty quid, it'll make up fer bad trade, an' keep me an' my poor missus from starving ;' that's why I did it, mister. Oh dear! oh dear!" and he moaned aloud.

"You complain of me," said I, "striking you because I happen to be stronger and handy with my fists ; now what about you striking your missus last night ; are you not stronger and handier with your fists than she ?"

The man groaned aloud.

"Aye," said he, "that were a mistake, it were wrong of me, an' she such a good missus, too, an' now I'll never see 'er agen ; she'll starve without me, she will, that's certain."

I made no reply, looking silently and sternly at him for some moments.

"If I let you off," said I, "this time, will you promise on your oath that you'll never strike your missus again ?"

"I will, mister. I will fer sure," and he looked eagerly at me.

"On your oath ?" said I.

"On my oath," he repeated. "S'elp me if I don't."

"Very well," said I. "I'll trust you for the sake of your missus, and remember I've got your name and licence number, and can always trace you if I like, but as long as you keep your word and are kind to your missus I'll not interfere with you."

"Thank you, mister, thank you kindly; you may trust me fer sure. Good day, mister, good day!"

"Good day," said I, "and, I say, if you see the Boswells, tell them you have met the 'Cooromengro.'"

The man nodded his head and made off, looking solemn and mystified at my last remark.

I took Drummer back to the van, our arrival being heralded with joyful barks from Con. I made what amends I could to my companions for my apparent ill-treatment of them, and soon we were on the road again, a happy family, satisfied and content with each other's company, which perhaps might not have been the case if we had been all humans.

As we came to the road where the pedlar's van had turned to the right I looked up, but it was nowhere in sight. Then I came to another cross-road and paused for a moment to consult my map.

While engaged on this task I heard a strange echo of sounds coming from the north. I looked along the road, and far in the distance I saw a collection of queer-looking objects upon wheels, the rumbling of which was now very plainly heard. Not having made up my mind as to the direction which I should take, I waited until the strange moving shapes should pass me. The mystery was soon cleared up, for a tall brake, drawn by three skewbald horses in uniform fashion, came along at an easy trot. On the box seat a thin, clean-shaven, horsey-looking man, wearing a long white mackintosh, a white cravat with a horse-shoe pin, a soft hat jauntily on one side, handled

the reins, a groom and another man sat alongside him. As he passed me he held up his whip at the salute, which I returned. The rest of the carriage was occupied by what might have been musicians, some awake and some asleep. On the side of the vehicle in large letters were the words "Spinder's Grand Cirque." Then came the strangest medley of equipages I have ever seen: lorries with long poles, lorries with shorter poles; strange box carriages full of canvas, others with seats, others with V- and triangular-shaped props for seating; a living-carriage full of ladies and young girls with their hair in curling papers; a closed carriage with yelping dogs; a massive tableau filled with men and boys; tiny carriages drawn by diminutive ponies, with a bevy of loose ponies scampering by their side; a strange one-seated object drawn by two mules, tandem fashion, and driven by the most solemn-looking man I have ever beheld; another living-carriage, evidently the home of the proprietors; a pony-carriage drawn by four ponies and driven by a business-like-looking man with an alert-looking groom by his side. This extraordinary panorama of wheels, horses, and gaudy colour came to an end, with an enormous elephant bringing up the rear, two men sitting on its back guiding the animal with long sticks with pointed needles attached.

It was a novel sight to behold on the lonely country road, and I was much impressed by the cheerfulness of their demeanour. Those who were not sleeping were singing choruses which were echoed from carriage to carriage. Nor did I myself escape criticism. I received invitations to

"Come and join us," and "Fall in, mister, come along," and remarks such as "A retired circus bloke," "Do you want a job?" and "Come out of yer shell an' do some work." These and many others were hurled at my unoffending head.

Drummer showed some restiveness at the appearance of the elephant, and I was obliged to cover his eyes with my cap, Con, in the meantime, keeping up a terrific bombardment of yaps and barks until the strange, happy cortege passed out of sight. We then resumed our way, which was in the wake of the circus people. What a happy people they were! I reflected. What a healthy life this travelling about day after day in the early morning air, gaining fresh vigour and new life, experience and knowledge, and happy social enjoyment on the open road! It seemed idyllic, and what a pity that this class of entertainment, so innocent, so interesting, so cheerful, and so harmless, appears to be going out of fashion! What a loss the children of our future generation will have! Aye, and children of a larger growth too.

We travelled along the road feeling very small and insignificant after the magnificence which had preceded us. Cottagers and country-folk, who otherwise would have stared curiously at us, now took little or no notice of our presence; they doubtless compared us with the glory which had gone before, and that to our disadvantage. The lesser will always be eclipsed by the greater light.

When we arrived at the little country town, after having done our twenty miles, I found it was entirely given up, mind and body, to the

fascinations of the Cirque. Indeed, I must confess that I myself did not escape the glamour, and this was emphasised when I saw coming along the main street these happy children of the road, now converted into kings, queens, emperors, empresses, knights in armour, fairies, giants, and hobgoblins, and I decided to be a child once more and go to see the wonders of the circus.

After fixing up the caravan in the yard of "The Bells," and stabling Drummer, I locked up little Con, telling him I would be back soon, and proceeded to the large marquee at the other end of the High Street. The tent was flanked on each side by the various gorgeous equipages of the establishment, two of the square box conveyances being utilised as pay boxes. At the front door stood the sharp business-looking man I had noticed early in the morning.

"The manager, I presume," said I, going up to him.

"Yes, sir," said he a little curtly. "My name is Mortimer. I'm the manager of this establishment."

"I have got a ticket," said I showing my tally for the boxes, for I had had an inward conviction that he thought I was going to ask for a free admittance. "I am a literary man," I jerked out, feeling very guilty at this assumption of so much intelligence, not to say intellect, "and I should be glad if I were permitted to have a few minutes' conversation with your performers."

"I'm afraid that is impossible." He looked at his watch. "You can get in half an hour, if that would be any good."

"Quite," said I, "and then I can come back and take my seat."

"You'll have to pay a 'pros'—a 'footing'—you know. The artistes are sticklers for that; five shillings the minimum."

"That's alright," said I, giving him a couple of half-crowns.

"Come this way." He took me through the large tent, now rapidly filling. At the rear there was an opening to a smaller tent, which was divided into two halves with canvas partitions; the first half being devoted to the horses and ponies, the second half, again subdivided by another partition, to the artistes; the ladies being on the left and the gentlemen on the right. This was explained to me by Mr. Mortimer, who took me to the portion occupied by the gentlemen artistes.

As I entered, a novel sight presented itself. The little angle of space was covered with dressing-boxes with the lids up, and having a foot-board on which the feet and extra clothing of the artistes were resting; each performer was sitting on a flap seat over the box. Some were pulling on their tights, others were "making up" their faces, and in the motley of a jester, a commanding figure, stood the solemn-looking individual I had seen in the early morning, driving the two mules tandem.

CHAPTER XIII

CAP AND BELLS

"Gentlemen," said the manager, "this is Mr.—er——" He looked at me.

"Alexander," said I.

"Alexander," he repeated. "Alexander the Great—er—author."

"A man who writes books," explained the jester to his somewhat dull-looking companions.

"Mr. Alexander has come," said the manager, "like his great ancestor, to conquer, not in warfare, but in literature. He seeks to solve the mysteries of our profession, to divine its fascination; to enjoy social intercourse with its brilliant stars. He has generously paid the footing, which I now hand to Mr. Tennyson-Brown."

He handed the money to the jester, who, taking it, bowed and said, "Sir, we will drink your health to-night, after the night show, at the Black Bull, and will be glad if you will honour us with your presence, sir."

The manager here shook hands with me effusively, stating that he must go back to his duty at the entrance. Mr. Tennyson-Brown, his face all greased, had been in the act of powder-puffing it. He completed it, then turning to me, said—

"Allow me to present these gentlemen to you,

sir. This is Mr. John Spinder, the son and heir of our noble proprietor, unequalled as a trick-act rider, and the best of fellows. This is Signor Spinello, the boneless marvel, was born without bones. He can wrap himself up in a handkerchief and carry himself off. These, the brothers Bokara, the marvellous trapezists, who face death twice daily. This, Waltereno, the famous jockey, who could win the Derby any time he chooses to do so. This is Thomaseno, the canine prodigy, who can make dogs tell the time and day of the month. These youths, Billy and Bobbie, are apprentices, destined one day to be stars of the first magnitude. These, sir, are the luminaries which go to make up the galaxy of our talent."

He bowed and proceeded to paint his eyebrows.

"You have left out yourself," said I. "I am sure you are the brightest of all the particular stars you have mentioned."

"I," said Mr. Tennyson-Brown, "am the poor jester, 'a poor player, that struts and frets his hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more.'"

"Yez should come in the evening," volunteered one of the brothers Bokara, in a strong Belfast accent. "We allus use the day show as a practice, the night show's what yez should see."

"Yes," said young Spinder, "the day show is only intended for children; the real thing is in the evening."

"Perhaps I will attend both," said I.

Here Spinello, a hungry-looking young man, commenced to bend and stretch himself, preparatory to entering the ring; then the band struck up

"The Battle of Prague," with much trombone and big drum accompaniment.

Conversation was difficult. I therefore told them I would go and secure my seat, and withdrew.

The large tent was very crowded; the boxes with people of quality, and the rest of the interior with children, who, on the slightest incitement or provocation, cheered lustily. I admired all that I saw, including the ponies, dogs, and gentlemen artistes, and lost my heart completely to the little fairies and lady equestrians.

When all was over I passed through the entrance and saw Madame Spinder wrapping up the coins received during the day into paper cartridges. She was in one of the square box ticket offices close to the door, and as I went by I thought I would like some change, sometimes difficult to obtain on the road.

"Can you oblige me with change for a sovereign?" said I.

She gave me a cartridge already made up. I thanked her, and gave her the sovereign, which she tested vigorously.

After returning to my family and taking tea I strolled through the little country town with Con to make a few purchases, and with this object I untwisted the cartridge of silver which I had received from Madame Spinder, in order to place the loose change in my vest pocket. When I opened the packet I was astonished to find that it contained gold, twenty sovereigns in fact instead of twenty shillings. I smiled at the thought of Madame's perturbation when she discovered her mistake, and in order to lessen this in some

degree I returned to the Cirque, and knocked at the door of the proprietor's living carriage. It was quickly opened by Mr. Spinder himself, a stout, medium-sized man with a shrewd, intelligent face, and hair turning grey.

"Can I see Madame?" said I. "I gave her a sovereign to-day for a pound's worth of silver, and I find that she has made a mistake."

"You should have found it out hearlier," said Madame, coming forward, "before you left the winder. We can't make good any mistakes afterwards. If we did that we'd 'ave no hend of people coming back saying they was a shilling short, an' maybe more."

"What is it, sir?" said Mr. Spinder, noticing my smile.

"Well," said I, "Madame has been so good-natured as to give me twenty sovereigns instead of twenty shillings."

"What!" shrieked Madame, "and 'ave you brought it back? I'm much obliged to you, I'm sure. Thank you very much, sir," as I handed back the coins. "Thank you very much."

She counted the gold, and as I lingered she again thanked me.

"Do you—do you—want anything?"

"I want silver instead of the gold I have returned to you," said I.

"Oh dear!" said Madame, "of course; what am I thinking of? My 'ead's in a whirl."

Mr. Spinder looked on sardonically.

Mrs. Spinder brought me a fresh cartridge.

"You'd better open it," said she, "to see as I 'aven't given you coppers this time."

"Thank you," said I, "it's all right."

"Thank you," said Mr. Spinder, still in the sardonic mood.

I returned, making my purchases. In the evening I again attended the Cirque. Madame recognised me, and was good enough to say that I could go in without a ticket, but I insisted. The tent was very crowded, but with a very different kind of audience, being practically all adults. Signor Bokara's remark was certainly justified, for all the artistes exerted themselves more fully, receiving much applause for their efforts. What pleased me most was Mademoiselle Letitia, the lady equestrian, a pretty, bright-eyed and rosy-faced young lady of about twenty-two years. She jumped over garters, through garlands, and finally through paper balloons with much verve and grace, the interval between each of these exploits being utilised by Mr. Mortimer, as ring-master, and Mr. Tennyson-Brown, the jester, in a duel of wit and repartee in which, much to the delight of the audience, Mr. Mortimer always came off second best. Very elegant and courtly in his cap and bells was Mr. Tennyson-Brown as he stepped about in graceful attitudes in the arena, quoting and misquoting Shakespeare and many other of the poets as he went along. At one time he stooped, and took an infant from its mother's arms who was sitting close by the ring.

"Let me nurse it for a moment," said he.

The woman, somewhat hesitatingly, gave up her babe.

Mr. Tennyson-Brown, amidst much excitement from the women-folk, took it to the centre of the

ring; then striking a graceful attitude, he looked down upon the sleeping face of the child and recited in the Lancashire dialect—

> "Thou art welcome, little Moppet;
> How tha smiles, an' well tha may,
> For 'tis scarcely a month
> Since first thou saw the leet o' day.
> Kings an' queens an' lords an' ladies
> Once were no more to see,
> An' the greatest wretch as hung on gallows
> Once was born as pure as thee—— "

Then, after a pause—

> "Thou little thinks, thou little Moppet,
> How I shall have to toil for thee,
> But mabbee, when I'm 'bliged to drop it,
> Thou'll happen do a bit for me."

He returned the sleeping babe to its proud mother amidst a storm of applause which he well deserved, for his articulation, feeling, and expression were most excellent, and might well be envied by many M.P.'s of the present day.

The entertainment concluded with a representation of "Mazeppa, or the Wild Horse of Tartary," in which Mademoiselle Letitia played the beautiful Olinska, and Mr. Tennyson-Brown the hero. Minor characters were represented by various members of the troupe, and the gypsies, by the tent-men and grooms. In the midst of all this excitement, and as a grand finale, the property man, in gypsy's costume, rushed in with a shovel upon which was lighted a mixed powder which threw vivid flares of different-coloured lights over the interior, and also emitted a most fearsome and horrible odour, which had the effect of producing the rapid exit of the audience, to the satisfaction

of the tent-men, who at once commenced to take down the tent and stow it away ready for the morning's journey.

I passed through the hustled, choking crowd, who all, between intervals of coughing, were expatiating on the merits of the show, some proclaiming their proclivity for one, and some for others; the jester, perhaps, taking the largest mead of praise.

I repaired to the Black Bull, there to await my guests. I had arranged with the landlord for supper and a smoke, and had secured a table for our own use in a corner of the bar-room. Signor Spinello was the first to arrive. I beckoned him to come and sit alongside me. He came, sniffing the odour of the hot-pot which was being prepared.

"A good smell," said he. "Do you ever write books about feasts and banquets and grand dinners?" he inquired of me.

"Never," said I; "they are quite out of my line."

"I'd like to find out a book with all them things in. You don't happen to know where I could get one, do you?"

"What do you want it for?" I asked.

"Well, you see, it's this way, sir. I'm a 'boneless,' and daren't take too much to eat, or I couldn't do my business, but it don't prevent me from feeling fearful hungry. Now I can scarcely abide that smell, it's so good, and I daren't have any, even if I could."

"You'll have to have some to-night," said I, "for it has been specially arranged for you."

"Crikey!" said he, "ain't it too bad," and he looked tragically at me.

"Now, Spinello," said I, "I know something of these matters, and I can assure you that you can always eat a good supper, but for the rest of the day your meals will have to be light."

He looked up, his face beaming with delight, but the rest of the company were now beginning to arrive.

They did not look quite so romantic in their everyday clothes as they did in their spangles and tights. Most of them, although it was yet summer, wore heavy overcoats with astrachan collars attached. Mr. Tennyson-Brown came up and sat alongside me, traces of his make-up still upon his face. They all seemed pleased at the little supper which had been prepared for them, doing justice to it, and little conversation ensued until smoking commenced, when anecdotes began to fly about, mostly reminiscent of old performers, or old proprietors, and which, if true, went to show that the persons mentioned were very extraordinary individuals. Mr. Tennyson-Brown was in a cynical mood, and expressed his belief that humanity was divided into two sections, namely, knaves and fools.

"Some of one, some of the other, and some of both," said he, with a dejected nod of the head.

Spinello was the surprise packet of the evening, and received much chaffing for his unwonted appetite.

"Not many foreigners amongst you," I observed to Tennyson-Brown.

"None," he said, "except in name. The

Bokaras are Belfast boys. Spinello comes from Birmingham. Waltereno is Yorkshire. Thomaseno comes from the little village (London); and Mr. Spinder, junior, was born in a caravan."

"And yourself?" I asked.

"I don't know," said he gloomily. "There's a mystery about my birth. I may be a vagrant or an earl."

"Never mind your origin," said I. "You give great pleasure to those who listen to you, and he is greatest who creates the most sunshine."

"Thank you," said Mr. Tennyson-Brown. He got up, knocked on the table for silence, and returned thanks to me in a flowery speech.

I replied, and we parted best of friends.

CHAPTER XIV

THE ROSE QUEEN

VERY early next morning I heard the rumbling of Spinder's heavy carriages as they passed through the silent streets, like ships passing out of harbour for a distant port. Happy children, thought I, aye, twice happy if they would but appreciate their opportunities, learning from nature the economies and the pleasures of life.

I did not rise until eight o'clock, then went into the inn and ordered breakfast, for in T——'s excellent "Where is it ?" book, under the heading of "Inns," I found the advice: "When convenient take your meals at inns; it saves trouble, and is a change."

The landlord, a biggish, red-faced man, soon had bacon and eggs with toast and tea ready for me, and a saucer of bread and milk for Con. He brought me the morning paper, too, and spoke in high praise of the equestrian performances of the preceding night.

"What I can't make out," said he, "is how they make that wonderful mare of theirs act so many parts. Last night it was white as 'Wild Horse of Tartary," now last year it was black as 'Bonnie Black Bess,' and the year before it was yellow in a fairy piece."

"I suppose they have to make it up, the same as the performers make themselves up," said I.

"Yes, I suppose so, but I wouldn't like the job; it would be whitewash one year, soot the next, and distemper the time before. It beats me how they do it."

I paid up, a very moderate bill, and harnessing Drummer, got the van out on to the road; then, with a "good-bye" to the landlord, we went through the little country town at an easy pace.

Before leaving, however, I stopped at the door of a hatshop and, going inside, asked the proprietor, a middle-aged man having the appearance of a local preacher, if he could supply me with a bowler hat.

"I can supply you with anything, sir," said he with decision.

"Very well," said I, "a bowler hat;" and I gave him the size, but, try as he would, he could not supply me with one that fitted me. There were plenty of the correct size, but they all appeared too round, and would not fit over my head. At last he gave it up.

"I'm very sorry, sir," said he, "but your head is not the right shape."

"Well," said I, "since I cannot alter my head, perhaps you can alter a hat for me."

"I couldn't," he said, shaking his head, "it would spoil it. No, sir, your head is not the right shape."

As he seemed convinced on this point, I nodded "good morning" and resumed my journey, wondering for some time afterwards why Celtic

and Anglo-Saxon heads would not fit into the same hat.

We had a very pleasant bit of road ahead, and Drummer took us along at a good pace. For some time there were plenty of pedestrians about, agricultural labourers, cyclists, and the like, who looked at us, and, no doubt, wondered if I was a portion of Spinder's establishment going the wrong way. Then we passed the last cottage, and, after, appeared to have the country to ourselves. Footpaths had disappeared, and in their place stretches of bright green grass, at which Drummer cast a longing eye, accompanied us for many miles. Here and there the green was broken with wild, tangled hedgerows, under whose shade tall foxgloves jostled against each other in all their majesty of colour. Here and there, too, were tufts of harebells, exquisite in shape and colour; raucous clumps of nettle, on whose dark leaves peacock and gorgeous admiral butterflies gyrated and fluttered. Birds were silent in song, except the robin, singing sweetly as ever, the yellow-hammer with its mournful refrain, and the sturdy bullfinch with its energetic pipings.

I choose a favourable locality to stop for the mid-day meal, and, after preparing dinner and placing it on the stove to cook, Con and I stepped out on to the roadway, I loosening Drummer for his well-earned rest. How differently humans and animals regard this great virtue of "rest"! Con goes sniffing about at everything within reach, curious and inquisitive, at bramble, bush, and fence. Drummer at once falls to feeding, first taking the grass, and then, raising his splendid

head, clips the young, fresh leaves of the thorn-bush. I, poor humanity, loll on the grass, my head against a bank. I repeat to myself George Herbert's "Gifts of God," wondering at God's reluctance to give rest to man.

> " 'For if I should (said He)
> Bestow this jewel on My creature,
> He would adore my gifts instead of Me,
> And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature,
> So both should losers be.' "

God, afterwards realises the craving of man for rest, and in His beneficence and mercy bestows it.

> " 'Yet let him keep the rest,
> But keep them with repining restlessness.
> Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
> If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
> May toss him to My breast.' "

This leads me to conjure up the separate lives that His creations live. The subject is too vast to think of in one man's lifetime, so I confine myself to trying to analyse the lives of Drummer, Con, and myself. I had compared our physical status, and was in the middle of social amenities, when I must have fallen asleep, for I was rudely awakened by Con barking close to my ear; I at once sat up. My first thought was for the safety of our dinner. I hastened to the van, but found that everything was in order, and in a short time Con and I were enjoying our mid-day repast. Then I gave a handful of oats and a drink of water to Drummer. As I saw him gulping down the latter I thought what a mercy it was that horses were all total abstainers.

We resumed our journey on a level road; the green pastures gradually giving way to golden

corn and nodding oats, heavy crops of which bounded each side of the roadway. The hedge-rows were full of wild rose, giving a delightful odour as we passed along. We appeared indeed to be entering into a land of roses, for every cottage that we passed was practically smothered in them. Roses white and roses red clambered over the porches, around the windows, and even climbed on to the roofs and around the chimneys. Tiny hamlets, old fashioned and quaint, abounded in the luxuriant blooms of white, cream, pink, and crimson roses. We were indeed in Rose-land.

At one village, somewhat larger than the rest, we were held up by a strange procession. First came the village policeman, tall, important, and consequential; then the village band, playing quaint old English airs; afterwards, a company of boys and girls dressed in white, with bright-coloured sashes, performing the intricacies of the Morris dance with great skill and precision as they wended along; then a tableau of a village wedding, a charming little boy and girl being the chief culprits, with their attendant accomplices all dressed in character. This was followed by tiny heralds, sceptre and crown bearers; then the Rose Queen, a charming little maiden mounted on a white pony and attended by her ladies-in-waiting; then came representatives of the colonies, succeeded by the maypole dancers carrying their pole aloft, and each holding their coloured ribbon; next, Comedy and Romance in various guises, representing shepherdesses, Red Riding Hood, Cinderella, Babes in the Wood, and other fairy characters; then the village choir, singing a

madrigal. The vicar and schoolmaster, with churchwardens and bellringers, brought up the rear of this remarkable and picturesque procession.

Needless to say, they were applauded and criticised by the crowds of onlookers, who came from many miles around to witness the annual ceremony of the crowning of the Rose Queen.

The pageant now entered a field close to where I stood, and marched to a dais where the Rose Queen was crowned by the squire's lady. The dainty monarch then ascended her throne, and after the heralds had noted the event by many blares of bugles, they called upon all representatives, past and present, to come forward and pay homage to her majesty. This they did in set speech and phrase, everything being accomplished with artless ease and grace. The sports and dancing followed with great spirit, all passing off as happy as a marriage bell.

I was so interested that I got out of the caravan and entered the field, and was rewarded by an introduction to her Majesty the Rose Queen, a delightful little personage, pretty and sweet as any of the roses she represented. Long may these ceremonies survive. Long may the spirit which fosters them exist, and long may we find the youthful manliness and childish sweetness surviving the call made upon them. Is it not the cradle of the character of the future men and women of old England ?

I lingered for a little time, conversing with some of the notables, with Cinderella, the Babes in the Wood, Red Riding Hood, the shepherdesses, and many other heroines of my infant retrospection.

Then taking leave of her sweet Majesty I passed out of the field, and we resumed our journey.

We were now going through marshy roads with sand dunes on our right, a sign that we were approaching the coast-line. It was, indeed, but a few minutes later when I first caught sight of the West Coast, with its broad expanse of water beyond, the Irish Sea, with its waves, its tempests, and caprices.

I followed our course southward, driving through prosperous lands, rich with corn, vegetables, and fruit. Past old houses surrounded with gay orchards. Diamond-windowed cottages with toy-like gardens resplendent with colour; old windmills and an ancient lighthouse which once marked the margin of the coast, but now, reclaimed, with fruitful crops around it, a mile away from the water over which it once held watchful reign.

We pressed on to the great seaport of the Mersey, where I had important work on the morrow, and choosing a pleasant hostelry close to the city, put up comfortably for the night.

CHAPTER XV

THE TOURNAMENT

I HAD promised the National Physical Recreation Society to organise and direct for them a tournament at Liverpool for the double object of calling attention to its work, and indirectly to assist in obtaining some funds. I had engaged Hengler's Circus, which it was said would hold five thousand people, independently of the arena. Now, as all caterers of amusements know, it is most difficult to obtain a financial success for a single performance on account of the heavy expense of advertising and billing a large town. I therefore resolved to try a new method. I had obtained the services of an ex-cavalry soldier, and giving him a good mount, dressed him, with the assistance of a theatrical costumier, in the character of Ivanhoe. He had an attendant squire, who was also well mounted and dressed in character too. Ivanhoe was armed to the teeth in shining armour with lance ready for the fray, and his faithful squire followed him at a respectful distance, being armed with a dagger at his waist-belt, and with bow and quiver of arrows slung over his shoulder. For a full week these mediævals patrolled the streets of Liverpool with dignity and in silence, absolute

secrecy being observed. In a short time they were the talk of the town, and the question "Who can they possibly be?" was on every man's lips. Mr. Alexander Balfour, one of the merchant princes of Liverpool, and head of the well-known firm Balfour, Williamson and Company, met me at the top of Lord Street, one of the principal thoroughfares of the city, and hooking his arm in mine we walked into the centre of the town, he expounding and explaining his antipathies to drunkenness and amusements. As we walked along the street Ivanhoe came along on his prancing steed, his squire following demurely behind. They, as usual, were the centre of attraction.

"I wonder who they are?" said Mr. Balfour. "Now that is a character I admire—the mediæval and the chivalrous."

Unfortunately, at this juncture Ivanhoe caught sight of me, and raising up his lance to the rest, gave me a respectful salute, his squire following his example. I returned the salute, when instantly the public gaze was turned off from them on to myself, and they commenced to put two and two together, and Mr. Balfour asked in surprise—

"Do you know them?"

"The knight," I said, "represents Ivanhoe, and the other horseman is his squire."

"Yes, yes; but how is it they know you?"

"Yes," I admitted, "I know them, and their object is to arouse public interest and curiosity, which I think they are doing very well."

"Capital! Capital! Yes, they are doing that;

all the town is talking about them. It is a most worthy object."

But the mischief was done, so I had a small handbill printed, which read—"Hengler's Circus. A tournament of champions will take place on ——. Champion Athletes. Champion Gymnasts. Champion Boxers. Champion Wrestlers. Champion Swordsmen. Champion Jumpers. Champion Strong Men. International Tugs-of-war. None but champions can compete. Chair to be taken at 8 p.m. by Lord Beresford. Director of Tournament, A. Alexander."

Thousands of these small bills were scattered about by the faithful squire of the knightly Ivanhoe as they patrolled the streets. I had secured the services of the leading champions of the day, either honorary or by payment. The international tugs-of-war I organised amongst the police force, including one representing Germany from the German sausage-makers of the city.

Everything looked promising, and I went away on my caravan trip, leaving a representative behind me to carry out my instructions. When I returned I was informed that all the seats had been sold some time past, and there was great anxiety to see the tournament. I met Lord Beresford at Lime Street Station, where, as usual, he had a popular reception, and after dinner we drove to the tournament.

As we approached the circus we found that the traffic was stopped, and we had the greatest difficulty in obtaining admission, it being estimated that there were at least ten or twelve thousand

people around the doors anxious to get in but could not. One little irate Irishman followed at our heels, and the attendants, thinking he belonged to us, passed him in. He instantly rushed up to one of the pay-boxes. "Where is the perpetrator of this huge fraud?" said he, excitedly. "I want five minutes with him." And he rolled up his sleeves and assumed a pugilistic attitude. The money-taker, who had a sense of humour, pointed to one of the competitors, George Steadman, champion wrestler of England, six feet one inch in height, fifty-five inches around the chest, and weighing twenty-two stone. The little Irishman looked at him in astonishment, then rolled down his sleeves again.

"Well, it's a shame!" said he in a more peaceful tone. "And I've come all the way from ould Oireland to see the fun!"

The place was packed, not only was every seat filled, but part of the arena was also taken up, and into this we squeezed the little Irishman; but a more boyish aspirant for a seat, who managed to reach the vestibule, was the youthful Earl of Sefton, whom we took along with us.

Lord Beresford, after his speech, had a great reception, and the programme was at once commenced. The first item was a tug-of-war between a baby elephant and twelve youngsters dressed in white costumes. The baby elephant had, attached to his harness, a rope at his rear. Loud did he protest at the indignities being placed upon him, moving his feet from side to side, and swaying his trunk in the air. The youngsters, taking

advantage of his feet being off balance, gave a combined pull, pulling the unfortunate elephant first on to his tail, and then on to his back, where, with his feet in the air, he trumpeted loudly and terribly, which so alarmed the youngsters that they all fled. We had some difficulty in getting the elephant on to his feet again and out of the arena.

The contests between the champions in their various branches of sport were most popular, and were enthusiastically cheered; but the place was stifling hot, and, as Lord Beresford put it, "not room for a microbe to breathe." We had a double row of the public sitting around the margin of the arena, which was all the room we could spare, and the military band had the public mixed up with them. We had all the windows open, but dare not open the doors for fear of the invading public. I stopped one man who was struggling to get a word with Lord Beresford. He gave me his card, it was Lupton Pasha. I brought him to Lord Beresford, but he was obliged to sit on the floor—a practice in which I understood Pashas were expert. Of course, there were one or two hitches in the programme. I had engaged one of the Balaclava heroes, who used to drive a cab in Liverpool, to attend in his uniform and perform various prodigious cuttings and hackings at imaginary Russians who were barring his progress. For the same incident I had also engaged a leading elocutionist to recite "The Charge of the Light Brigade." I had instructed the old soldier to suit the action to the word as the poem proceeded, and expected the item to be most

popular. I was sitting next to Lord Beresford, explaining the item, when one of my assistants, an Irishman, after a big struggle, got within earshot of us.

"If ye plaze, Mr. Alexander," said he, in a stage whisper loud enough to be heard by all in our vicinity, "the 'Balaclava' haroe is bloind dhrunk. What shall we do wid him?"

I thought for a moment; then, as a lightning decision was necessary, said, "Bandage him up like a wounded soldier, carry him in, place him on his back, put his sword upon his chest, and ask the elocutionist to recite to him."

"Roight, sorr."

My aide-de-camp vanished, and in a couple of minutes they brought in the apparently wounded hero, heavily bandaged, a dab of blood (French polish) on his face and brow. He seemed to writhe in his agony in his efforts to get up, while the elocutionist faithfully performed his task, drawing sympathetic cheers from the audience as he pointed to the recumbent and dying hero.

Another hitch was the international tugs-of-war. These were in teams of eight men each, and, as I have said, were principally drawn from the police force, to whom I acted at that time as physical adviser. The teams were all fine-looking men. The Germans, although heavy, were very soft, and were soon pulled over by England. Ireland and Scotland were, however, the two "crack" teams, their weight averaging seventeen stone seven pounds per man, and their height six feet one inch each. There was much rivalry between these two teams, and a free fight was

not impossible if things did not run smoothly. I therefore arranged for it to be the concluding item of the evening. The rival teams were splendid examples of physical development, and determination was plainly written on their faces. When the word was given and the first shock over, the teams settled down grimly to their task, watching each other for the slightest lapse of effort on their rivals' part, ready at any moment to bring on a surprise pull. This state of things lasted for a quarter of an hour amidst the excited cries of the Irish and Scotch supporters of the men; then the building commenced to empty, that is, the occupants of the boxes and stalls left, many of whom came from a considerable distance and had to catch trains.

Another five minutes passed with no alteration, then the Scotch made their effort, and commenced to pull their opponents slowly but surely over the line. The excitement was intense, but at this critical moment a wild Irishman, his eyes nearly starting out of his head, leaped from the gallery.

"Hurroo for ould Oireland!" he yelled, and caught hold of the rope.

This new accession of strength turned the tables and the Scotch were now beginning to waver, then, with a wild whoop, a Caledonian also leaped from the gallery and hung on to the rope of his side, and once more the Scotch were commencing to have the best of it. More partisans, however, came pouring in for either side, hanging on to the rope or on to the bodies of those who held the rope, until the *impasse* was so great that

neither side could stir. Lord Beresford had to catch a train back to London, and have some supper before he did so, so we left them to their struggle, and, as far as I know, they are at it yet!

CHAPTER XVI

HAWARDEN

As I drove my caravan through the streets of the city on the following morning, my acquaintances eyed me with some surprise, not to say astonishment, doubtless thinking I had gone mad or something very near it. When asked by friends where I was going to, I replied "westward," which I fear sounded rather enigmatical to them. Drummer, too, doubtless had his share of surprise and astonishment as he eyed the giant draught horses which passed him on his way to the landing stage. When we approached the broad luggage boat which was to convey us across the Mersey, he displayed for the first time some trepidation, but after rubbing his nose, patting his neck, talking to him, and finally covering his eyes, I persuaded him to go over the gangway on to the boat, and in a short time we had passed the great ocean liners in mid-stream, and had once more disembarked—on the Cheshire side of the river. Here Drummer was quite happy again, and we made rapid progress through the town, until once more the delights of the countryside greeted us.

This peninsula of land, flanked on its sides by the Mersey and the river Dee, was once a paradise for those seeking solitude and rest in a wilderness

of wild country, but one by one the merchant princes of Liverpool have made it their home; others have followed their example, and now it has become dotted with small estates with a Suburbia hedging them around. The road was excellent going, with plenty of grass and wild flowers to refresh the eye, and when we stopped for the mid-day rest, I think we all felt that we had left big cities and big crowds behind us for some time to come. Over our lunch I perused with some interest, not to say amusement, T——'s "Where is it?" book, which was not only a guide book relating to travellers' requirements and to the contents of the caravan in particular, but also contained some passages which gave food for reflection.

As I looked at my two companions I turned to the book to see if T—— had anything to say about them. Under the heading of "Animals" he had written, "Horses (Scotchmen), Mules (Irishmen), Asses (Englishmen), Goats (Welshmen)." I wondered if I was to assume this entry suggested any affinity between their characteristics. Under the heading of "Authors" he had written "Author (cab-horse), Book (cab), Publisher (driver)." I presume the assumption in this case was, if the public did not patronise the cab the horse would be sent to Germany, the cab cremated, and the driver packed off to some almshouse.

Once again, we started on our way, a tramp arriving just too late to share in our meal, but he put on such an exquisite expression of poignant starvation that I gave him a coin, which sent him

on his way rejoicing. The rest of the way was easy travelling, and after passing over the Dee in safety we landed in Wales; the land of romance and music; the land of literature and hard words; a land where, as an Irishman once said to me, all evil-disposed persons should be immured on account of the great number of "L's" it contained.

I had frequently tramped Wales, and was very familiar with its roads and its mountains, but this was my first essay in caravaning, and I wondered what success I should meet with in stabling or "pitching" accommodation, especially during the summer months, when North Wales at least would be full of visitors. I decided, therefore, to travel along the inner or high roads, avoiding the coast resorts as much as possible. As we gradually mounted into Hawarden and drove through the main street of the village a flood of pleasant recollections came over me. There was the great castle where I had more than once enjoyed the hospitality of the Gladstones. How well I remembered taking tea with Mrs. Gladstone, and the conversation we had respecting dress and fashions, of which I knew practically nothing. When, however, I suggested that men dressed to please themselves and women to please others, she laughed merrily, and was pleased to say that I knew a great deal about the matter. She then gave her views, which were all full of common sense, as most things were that she spoke about.

Here was a bend in the road leading to the church where I once met the great statesman. I was about to pass him when he stopped me and

told me the best views to be seen from Hawarden; then he expressed astonishment at my supposed energy, and wondered how it was that I never seemed to tire. I told him that it must be on account of the long training I had had, and suggested that he in his way, worked harder than I did, inasmuch as his work consisted of so much mental responsibility.

"Yes," he admitted, "the work of the mind is, I believe, more laborious than that of the body, especially when that work contains the element of anxious responsibility. "Now tell me," he went on, "do you not require some stimulation other than the nutriment of the muscles for your physical work?"

"Oh yes," said I, "there must always be a motive in order to stimulate the nervous system which commands the muscles."

"Yes, I think we must all have some motive," he replied, "some great motive, in order to stimulate and inspire work, whether it be that of the mind or of the body."

He spoke of books as was his custom, and asked me what I was reading just then. I told him I was refreshing my memories of Kingsley; he said Kingsley was a good mental food for all who read him. He shook hands with me and passed on his way to the rectory. Later on, on that same evening, at the curates' hostel, situated close to the church, I took supper with the curates, two splendid young men, but widely different in temperament. The Rev. Harry Drew, a tall and rather slender figure, with a very serious face, as though all the responsibility of the diocese was

on his head; the other, the Rev. Mr. Kerry, a shorter figure with a pleasant round face, always full of merriment and mischief. It was on that evening that the Rev. Harry Drew told me, with heightened colour, of his engagement to Miss Gladstone, and later on Mr. Kerry, coming in a late scholar to supper, cheerful and merry as usual, rallied him on the point and on the iniquity of the wedded state.

As I passed on my way I was recognized by some of the villagers, who informed me that the Gladstones were absent. I was just parting from my friends when a tall, lank man with black hair and pale face, rushed up to the van door, and shaking hands effusively with me, said, with a strong American accent, "I understand you are Alexander, the physical director; I heard the folks here say so. Now you know G. S. Jones, once of Lancashire, then of New York, and now of Dorchester, Boston, Massachusetts; waal, when he heard I was taking a trip to Europe he said, 'If you see Alexander, the physical director, just tell him some particulars about me.' Waal, G. S. Jones went on the staff of the *Tribune*, and became well up on that journal. Then he moved along to Dorchester, Boston way, and is doing big things. He's alright is G. S. Jones. He's married now and got a family. No swank about him and doing well. I'll tell him that I met you here at Hawarden Castle, which I've just finished 'doing,' and as I've only three minutes to catch my train, I'll just say 'farewell' to you and give him your message." Again he shook hands effusively with me, and without giving

me time to say a word, hurried off to catch his train.

We put up at the Glynn Arms, and after we had all had supper, I, as the evening was still light, took Con with me into the park. There was a cricket match on, but the players very considerately stopped their game for a few minutes in order to gossip with me about things past and present. After enjoying the beautiful old park I returned to the Glynn Arms, and, getting into a corner of the coffee-room, listened to the various remarks of the patrons as they came in and went out. How astonishing it is for a traveller to see day after day so many different faces, to hear so many different accents, and to listen to so many different thoughts on various topics! At the Glynn Arms it was mainly about agriculture and horses, and about the squire's doings and those of the rector, and about the return of the son of a well-known villager.

All these topics and many others were touched upon in the strong local accent which had a touch of the Welsh tongue about it, but woe, indeed, if any one accused them of this latter virtue, for it is a curious thing that the men on the borders of Wales, from Newport to Hawarden, always endeavour to disassociate themselves with the Cymry and rather lean to the influence and policy of the Anglo-Saxon.

In a little time I was found out, and had to undergo the bombardment of many questions. Even while I was answering these I was listening to the rooks returning to the Hawarden woods after their flight to the distant shores of

the Dee estuary. My memory went back to a time when Lord Gladstone invited me to help him to thin the woods of these offenders. I accompanied him, but refused a gun, telling him that I was a poor shot, and did not care to wound where I could not kill, and that, moreover, I had a liking for the cawing of the rooks. He laughed at me, and said that if we adopted that policy, game would overrun us, and, moreover, the farmers on the estate were insistent on a decrease of their numbers.

CHAPTER XVII

IN THE HILLS

We were in Wales. Everything, as we wended our way along, told us that we were. The accents of the people, their keen alert look. The business aspect of the men. The neat trim figures of the women, and the pretty children, satchels in hand, going to school. Here we were in a land of apparent prosperity, for where the land was not taken up with mining operations, chemical works or collieries, it was cultivated with very promising crops of oats, barley, and wheat, with root crops dividing them, but after we passed through one of the many small ancient towns which this part of Wales contains, I, and I am sure Drummer and Con thought as I did, longed for the sweeter air which the uplands contained. To the right it was low-lying, stretching far away to the sea. To the left, also far away, grim hills stared at us. "If," thought I, "we were only on top of those hills, what a grand view we would have, what wild-flowers we would see, and what sweet air we would breathe!" so I took the very next turn and directed our course south-west.

The road was fairly level for a few miles, when it became a gradual easy ascent. Con and I got out of the van for our morning walk, the two

animals becoming instantly engaged in much gossip; Con, with continuous yapping, and Drummer with heliographic twistings of the ears.

At the front of us there was the bent figure of a little old man, as, leaning on his stick, he walked forward for a few yards, then paused, surveyed the landscape, nodded his head, and then continued on his way.

"Good morning," said I as we came up to him. He turned and looked at me, a rather wrinkled old face with keen, black eyes and an abundance of greyish-white locks. He replied to my salutation in Welsh. I shook my head.

"I don't understand Welsh," said I. He looked at me with some degree of pity.

"Well! well!" said he, "you don't understand Welsh, it iss a great misfortune. Igh! igh! a great misfortune."

"So it is," I admitted. "Of course, I know just a little."

"Just a little. Well! well! just a little."

"A fine country about here," said I.

"A fine country. Igh! igh! a fine country. The finest in the world. Igh! igh! the finest in the world."

"Plenty of change, I suppose, since you were a boy?"

"Plenty of change since I wass a poy. Igh! igh! plenty of change since I wass a poy."

"Plenty of fighting on that plain in days gone by," volunteered I.

"Well! well! Plenty of fighting there wass to pe sure. Igh! igh! plenty of fighting in my teed."

"But now they are industrious, making money, happy and contented, and living in peace."

"Igh! igh! to pe sure, living in peace. Well, well! living in peace and making money!" he nodded mournfully.

"What age are you, Dad?" said I.

"What age am I? Well! let me see, what age am I? Past eighty I am, to pe sure, past eighty, in my teed. Igh! igh! past eighty." He again nodded his head mournfully.

"That's a great age," said I. "I hope you've got plenty of children and grand-children to look after you."

"Yes, in my teed I haf plenty off children and plenty off grand-children. My missus she wass a Davies, I am a Jones; ofer a hundred of Davies and Jones to-gether. Well! well! to pe sure now, ofer a hundred off Davies and Jones to-gether."

"Quite a battalion," said I. "I hope some of them are farmers in order to keep up your name in the land."

"Igh! igh! to pe sure there are farmers. Igh! igh! farmers and ministers. Igh! igh! ministers; and schoolmasters to pe sure, and shop-keepers. Igh! igh! shop-keepers. Igh! igh! Well! well!"

"Well," said I, "I must hurry on. Good morning. I hope you will have many birthdays, and have all your children and all your grand-children round about you."

"To be sure, yes, in my teed, to be sure. Igh! igh! Well! well! to be sure." He again nodded his head mournfully at me as I left him,

a quaint old figure on the roadside, wondering what kind of a life he had had and wondering how much more of it remained to him on this earth.

We halted at a suitable spot and I prepared our mid-day meal. When it was concluded I took out my "Where is it ?" book, wondering if T—— had anything to say about Welsh characteristics. Yes, here it was—"Welsh—'Great chapel goers. Their Sabbath receipt for weekday deceit.'" T—— was evidently a cynic, and as I rested on my back with flaunting wild weeds around me I tried to form my own conception of the Welsh, but although I mused for some time I did not get very far in my estimate. "They have enthusiasm," I soliloquised, "and that is a rarity in this period of commonplace."

"Now, Drummer," said I, looking ahead at the group of hills before us, "we've some climbing to do, but if we do it steadily I think we will get over it." Drummer walked on with dignity and power, Con scampering about.

Farmhouses were commencing to appear, then villas surrounded with fruit and flowers, and finally a town loomed in sight. A quaint old town it was, mediæval in its buildings; a grammar school, town-hall, church and castle, and a tempting homely inn, but we passed on until we attained the top of the ridge, from which a magnificent view was gained. Smiling valleys, babbling water-courses, wooded groves, rich gardens, shady woods; hills everywhere, and in the distance a lonely upland, and to this we steered. The road leading in this direction was not a very good one, it being rather narrow, and the surface rough and rutty,

I therefore stopped at the gate of the first farm I came to and inquired my way from a man who was working in the yard. He stared at me and at the van; then, uttering an exclamation in Welsh, he went indoors and shortly afterwards returned with a man whom I took to be the farmer.

"What iss et?" he inquired. I showed him my road map, as I did not wish to lead him astray with my pronunciation.

"Yes, inteed," he said, "straight on."

A little further on I came upon an apparition. It was that of a lady dressed in Welsh costume, dark blue skirt, scarlet cloak, and a tall conical beaver hat. She was mounted, and had two baskets pannier fashion, on the horse's back, also one in front of her, containing articles for the market. The animal was a little restive at the sight of the caravan, and the lady in voluble Welsh, gave him a bit of her mind, and afterwards treated me to the same compound. I raised my cap to acknowledge her compliments, and she cantered off, looking very irate and cross.

The road continued its rough surface for some miles, but the land appeared very rich. A smiling valley of plenty on my left and rich crops everywhere on the right. Then as the way became steeper, and the land wilder, I commenced to look out for a place to camp for the night. This I soon found and was about to stop when I saw on my right, half concealed by trees, a bungalow cottage surrounded with a well-flowered garden, the cottage itself having roses trailing over its porch and windows. I had scarcely finished admiring the house when I saw a lady sitting in

an easy-chair against a bank at one side of the garden. Thinking I had better ask permission before I pitched my tent, I halted Drummer, and opening the gate went towards her. She was a beautiful woman, I saw that at a glance, dark with lovely brown eyes now lit up by the sunlight that danced within them. Her well-shaped oval face was full of expression as she looked up in my direction with expectancy on her features as though she were greeting some older acquaintance. "A mistake here," thought I.

"Pardon me," said I, "but I have brought a caravan along the road and thought of putting up on the grass plot outside for the night. Have you any objection to my doing so?" Her smiles vanished for the moment.

"I will let you know," said she in a clear musical voice, and placing the book which she had been reading upon the chair, she hastened indoors. I heard some feminine conversation, and then an elderly lady came towards me.

"What is it you want?" said she, a smile breaking over her kindly face.

"I wanted to know," said I, "if I might rest my caravan on the grass plot outside for the night." She walked down the path with me to the gate, and threw a quick glance at the van, at Drummer and at Con. I think the last two named served as references for me, for she said:

"Yes, I think you might; you are, I suppose, travelling for pleasure?"

"Oh yes," I assured her, "just for pleasure. I am not a gypsy or a pedlar."

"No, I did not think you were," said she,

nevertheless giving me a quick look of inspection, "but we have to be very careful, as both gypsies and pedlars pass this way sometimes, and they make such a mess, and are sometimes troublesome."

"Well," said I, "I don't think I will either make a mess or be troublesome, but if you are not quite satisfied I will move higher up the road."

"Oh no, not at all!" said she. "I know the difference, and you have such a nice horse and such a pretty dog; what do you call him?"

"His name is Con," said I, "which is short for Confucius, and if he could speak I know he would tell you that both of his companions are quite alright and eminently respectable." She laughed.

"If we can supply you with anything, hot water or eggs or anything that we have, we shall be very glad, and I dare say Miss M—— will be glad to have a talk with you later on."

"Miss M——," said I, "that is a very familiar name to me."

"Miss M—— is blind," said she.

"Blind!" I echoed. "No, surely not?"

"Yes, she is blind. I am her companion and housekeeper."

"I am very, very sorry," said I. "She did not look so to me; she has a beautiful face, and her eyes, why they are lovely. Surely she cannot be blind."

"Quite blind," said she, "but she does not care to talk about it. If you speak to her later on, please avoid the subject, and talk on general matters. You will find her very well informed, and she has a charming manner."

"Thank you," said I, "but it has made me very sad, what you have told me."

"Yes, it is very sad, but there are many others worse off than she is."

I left her to look after Drummer, feeling an inexpressible sadness hanging over me during the operation.

CHAPTER XVIII

MOUNTAIN MISTS

While engaged in rubbing down Drummer the ladies came down the path and approached me.

"Miss M——," said the elder of the two, "is anxious to make the acquaintance of your horse and dog."

"I am sure they will feel honoured," said I. "This is my horse, Drummer—a nobler animal never existed. He has brought us from the East Coast of England, and endured the heat and toil of the day without a grumble."

She put up her hand, which her companion placed on Drummer's neck, and patted him.

"I have brought him an apple," said she. "I hope he won't find it too sour; they are not quite ripe yet."

She turned her smiling face upon me. Even then I could not detect the lack of sight in her lovely eyes. On the contrary, they were full of tenderness and expression. She felt her way to Drummer's face and rubbed his nose.

"Good old horse," she said, giving him another apple. "What a dear you are to come all this way without a grumble, and the roads about here are so hilly; are they not?" said she, turning to me.

"We have had a few lately," I admitted; "but Drummer is a very powerful horse."

"He is magnificent," said she, giving him more pats. "And where is your little dog? I have brought him a piece of sugar."

I lifted Con up to her. She gave him the dainty, and then stroked his head, back, and bushy tail.

"Why," said she, "he is silk all over like my muff." She took him in her arms. "What is his name?" said she.

"Confucius; I call him Con for shortness."

"Confucius, why Confucius? That is the Chinese deity. But what a strange idea!"

"Confucius," said I, "was a very wise person, and so is Con."

"Oh! that is it," said she, smiling. "Then while you are here I will make friends with him."

"This is my card," said I, taking one from my pocket book.

"I don't think we were properly introduced. I am Miss M——, and this is Miss R——."

Miss R—— read my name out to her.

"I expect you have found out that I cannot see."

"I did not know," said I, "until Miss R—— informed me of it. I thought I saw you reading in the garden."

"I was; but that was in Braille."

"Miss M—— can read very quickly," interjected Miss R——. "She will read to you if you care to hear."

I had finished giving Drummer his corn. The

two ladies had withdrawn for a few paces. Miss R—— now said—

"Miss M—— wishes to know if you will take supper with us. It will be ready in about half an hour."

"Yes, do," supplemented Miss M——. "You must, because I have taken possession of your dog, and he is included in the invitation."

"Thank you. I shall be delighted; it will save me some trouble. Now, may I show you the interior of the van?"

"We stepped inside, and I explained all the ingenuities of the interior, including my "Where is it?" book to them. They appeared delighted, and Miss M—— was most interested and keen in her inquiries of the details. We withdrew to the garden, Miss R—— went into the house and brought out another easy-chair.

"Miss M—— will entertain you while I prepare supper," said she, and then went indoors.

My companion proved a charming conversationalist, touching lightly and intelligently on current events. She read some Braille for me. It was a technical subject, but she read it quicker than any reader would have done from any ordinary book. She was full of praise of her companion, whom she declared had given up all her prospects in her devotion to her.

"And she had had such a lot of trouble," she added; "but she is so patient about it."

"She has a very kind face," said I. "I have often thought that heroines in fiction, who are usually under thirty, are not comparable to heroines in real life, who are mostly over that age."

She talked to me of her own education at the Royal Normal School, where she had acquired many accomplishments.

"I am sorry," she added, "that I could not obtain a university degree." She spoke with a subtle charm of manner, rose tints touching and passing over her face, her eyes lustrous and eloquent in her earnestness.

"Some women," said I, "have a degree that no university can give; you must be satisfied with that."

Miss R—— now called us in. We passed into the cosy dining-room, where an excellent supper awaited us. We afterwards took tea in the garden.

"The weather is so treacherous up here," said Miss R——, "that we always take advantage of the elements when they are favourable."

"There is a wind rising now," said I.

"Yes, I think we had better go indoors."

"Don't you think," said Miss M——, "that you had better put your horse in our barn? There is plenty of straw there, and if the wind increases it would be very cold for him outside."

"Thank you on behalf of Drummer. I don't think he cares much for cold winds, and I shall feel more comfortable about him when I know he is under cover."

Drummer was accordingly placed in his new comfortable quarters for the night. We then adjourned to the little drawing-room, where Miss M—— played and sang for us. Her voice was not very strong, but she sang and played with rare sweetness and expression, and the clear

articulation of her words was remarkable. We spoke of music and its development from the time of the great composers up to the present day. Miss M—— said she liked the music of St. Paul's, and Miss R—— favoured that of Westminster Abbey. I told them that my ideal organ of the future would be one that interpreted the music of the spheres, of the angry elements, thunder, lightning; storms and hurricanes; wind from the mountains and the beating of rain, with the gentler moods of mountain torrents, babbling streams; the song of birds; children's voices. This, with orchestral and choir accompaniments, should be the ideal of our desires and the hope of our future organ builders. Miss M—— clapped her hands.

"That would be delightful," she said gleefully; "but, no," and her expression became downcast, "it would be impossible."

"There is nothing impossible in these days," said I. "It is but a question of time before we realise it."

What a delightful evening that was! the interesting conversation; the sweetness of the music; the placid cheerfulness of Miss R——, and the rare beauty of Miss M——. In every man's brain there is a company of sweet women, to some of which he unconsciously gives a commission. I thought of this as I rose to depart.

They were pleased to say that they had enjoyed my society.

"Thank you," said I. "You have both been kind and charitable to a poor traveller on the road, who will never forget your goodness to him."

"It has been very pleasant for us," Miss R—— assured me, and Miss M—— in the same breath assured me of it too.

"And yet," said I, "when first I approached you, you greeted me with a smile, but when you heard my discordant voice the smile vanished."

Miss M—— at once became confused, a rosy blush swept over her face, and picking up Con she took him off to the kitchen to find some tit-bit for him.

"I have made a mistake," said I to Miss R——.

"Just a little," she said in a low voice. "The fact is that years ago, a young gentleman went to considerable pains to obtain an introduction to her, but when he found out that she could not see, he left, promising to return some time. That time has never come, and I don't suppose ever will come. But she is a little romantic, and when she grows older it will pass away."

In my lonely caravan that night, with the wind moaning about me, my thoughts were given to these two women living their lives in their solitary bungalow. Thinking of Miss M—— I concluded that nature intended her for an angel, but had only succeeded in making her a woman. As for Miss R——, the rustle of wings was never far away as she went through her daily toil.

Despite the howling of the wind I slept soundly, Con, probably owing to many dainties he had received, alone having troublesome dreams. The sweet air of the morning pouring into the van made me rise early; I rose and attended to Drummer's wants, then harnessed him. As I was about to prepare my own breakfast, Miss M——

came down the path, and calling me by name, told me, to my surprise, that breakfast was ready waiting for me. I hesitated for a moment, then regarded it as one of fortune's gifts, and accepted the situation. It was a homely, well-cooked breakfast, and I fared much better than I otherwise would have done.

After pouring out my thanks I bade them good-bye, and somewhat sorrowfully directed my course to the westward. It was a gradual ascent for about an hour. I then reached what seemed to be a tableland, wild and uncultivated; more gorse than heather, with patches of bracken and dank mountain grass.

The wind had increased, whistling fiercely on my right, howling terribly when I came to any exposed place, and moaning uncannily when I dipped into any hollow. A slight pattering of rain beat against my face, then the rain ceased, and a mountain mist usurped its place. The mist thickened, and I became a little anxious about the safety of our progress. I got out and led Drummer by the head. I could only see for a few yards distant. The mist was being blown into strange and fantastic shapes around the bracken and boulders on the heath. I wondered at their irregular shapes, at the strange belief the moor folk had that each boulder contained a departed spirit of some saint or ogre, as it pleased their heated imagination. Then I saw one misshapen boulder, the mist wreathing about it, twisting it into angular form and grotesque outline. The mist was thickening, my hair was soaking, and my eyes smarting, when, to my astonishment, I thought I saw the

stone or boulder assume human shape, standing upright. I passed my hand over my eyes, and cleared away the moisture. When I looked again the stone had assumed its original contour, the mist beating pitilessly upon it. I noted carefully our progress along the road, only a few feet being visible in front of me, smiling to myself at the distorted objects the mists were creating, when suddenly a fearful cry filled the atmosphere about me, I felt a shock which almost bore me down. There was a clawing as though some wild creature had jumped on to my back and was tearing at my neck. Drummer became restive, shivering and tossing up his head, the dog whining. I dare not loose the reins, but turning as well as I was able, I seized hold of the object and drew it off me. The grey, insane face of a woman glared at me from out a bundle of rags.

"Steady," said I. "What are you doing, you witch?" I held the figure at arm's length. Then she uttered a succession of wild cries, writhing and twisting to loosen herself from my grasp. Drummer, affrighted, was commencing to rear. I let go of the woman and gave my attention to him. The woman at once disappeared in the mist screaming, and it was some time before I got Drummer into his normal state of mind.

CHAPTER XIX

GIPSY LOVELL

When I at last pacified him I looked around me for the cause of his terror, but she was nowhere to be seen. I waited impatiently for some time, hoping that the poor creature might return, for the thought that she was some poor wretched wanderer bereft of reason made me feel uncomfortable. I therefore called out repeatedly, but heard nothing but the echo of my own words as they struck some unseen boulder hidden in the mist. Accordingly I decided to proceed on my way, a decision which seemed to be appreciated by my companions, for it is wonderful how dumb animals are influenced by untoward circumstances of any kind.

They both now seemed in a measure to recover their cheerfulness, and once more I was busy endeavouring to negotiate our way. It is a trite saying that the shortest is sometimes the longest road, and so it proved in this case, for the way became very rough, and had evidently not seen a road-mender for some considerable time. At last we came to what seemed a change, a few pine trees loomed in the misty shadows, and I was hoping that they foretold some sign of civilisation, when I again heard the horrid scream of the

wandering maniac. Again I waited, giving an answering call to her cries, but without avail, and once more we plodded through the mist. We covered many miles in this disheartening fashion. We had evidently got on an old disused road, though indeed the mist was so heavy that it did not surprise me that I did not meet with any living creature, with the exception of the poor nomad whose cries, it may have been imagination, I fancied I heard wailing in the distance now to the right, and now to the left of us. There was, however, no help for it, and we stalked our way along feeling and hoping something must happen very soon.

I had been keeping a sharp look-out for any deviation in the path, but had not come upon anything save an occasional horse or animal track of some kind. Then I felt the change, there was an increase of temperature, and the next minute Drummer's hoofs sounded more normal as though he had struck a reasonable road. It was still very misty, but I could see that we had reached a highway, cutting across our path from left to right. Instinct made me turn to the right, and the next minute we were on a decent road.

It was now easy going, and in a short time we had come upon a collection of cottages. I knocked at a door, a woman opened it, but looked frightened. I inquired my way. She shook her head, telling me in Welsh that she did not understand English. I thanked her, and tried another cottage, and on meeting with a similar response wrote out the name of my destination very plainly. The woman at once brightened up, and with much volubility

pointed out the way I was going. This made me feel more cheerful, and calling a halt, I prepared the midday meal, now long overdue.

The mist was still about in vapours and patches, evidently broken by the few cottages we had come across. I went on with my preparations, not caring to trouble the inmates for any favour, as I saw by their manner that they were a trifle nervous of our presence.

Dinner over we resumed our way. The road proved excellent, having a good hard surface. It was a gradual ascent with occasional dips which, however, were not serious, consequently we made good headway. The mist, too, was slowly clearing away, and as there seemed no necessity to lead Drummer, I entered the van for a little driving.

My clothes, by reason of the atmosphere, had become rather damp, and changing my coat I took up the reins feeling more comfortable. I passed another village, this time a larger one; I did not stay, but as I was passing out at the farther side I saw, a little distance from the road, a gypsy van. The horse was hobbled, and there was a fire on the grass, around which a man and woman with a couple of children were busy drying some garments. As I approached they regarded me and the van with much interest. I stopped and wished them "good day." They nodded their reply. I inquired my way, which they told me surlily enough.

"Have you seen anything of the Boswells lately?" said I.

"They are in the north," said the man. Even

while he spoke, the children, dark sturdy little imps, had run up to my van with outstretched palms. "Lovo," they cried. This was not very romantic, but it was their nature, so I gave them something. "Skukora," they cried, running with the coins to their mother. This rendered conversation more easy. I told them I had met the Boswells on my journey here, and also told them of my adventure that afternoon, and asked them if they had ever come across the woman. They told me it was a "Tshovihawni" (witch) or a "Beng" (devil) I had seen, or maybe a "Mûleno" (fairy). I pointed to the marks on my neck, and said "mûlenos" did not scratch.

"Then it must be a 'Beng,'" said the man. I inquired his name, and asked where he was going. "Lovell," said he, "and we are going to the mountains. It is the only place where the Romany is left in peace."

"Then I may see you again," said I, "for I am going that way myself. 'Kosko-dives' (good day)."

"'Kosko-dives,'" they replied, a little surprised at my incursion into Romany.

We went on our way, and although we were still in a wild country the road was good, and if anything on the downward grade. Boulders, bracken, gorse, and heather came into view, and in turn gave way to mountain pines, and as the road descended, to splendid oaks at either side of the road. The further we descended the more clear became the atmosphere. Great mountains appeared in view, their sides clothed in verdant foliage. The roadway itself was now lined with

larch and other beautiful trees. Bullfinches piped their welcome as we passed, and unseen cascades usurped the function of the silent birds, singing rapturously as we wheeled along.

It looked as though we were approaching Paradise after purgatory in Hades. Then strains of music floated up towards us. What could it be? It was divine. I had never heard anything like it. I pulled up Drummer to enjoy it the more. He, true to his nature, and knowing the benevolence of his master, at once commenced to crop the hedge. I listened to the exquisite music, trying to fathom its import and its nature. I listened intently. A little puff in the wind confessed; they were bells, but, oh, what bells! I had never heard anything so lovely before, so rich, so tremulous, so comforting.

> "I've heard bells chimin'
> Full many a clime in,
> Tolling sublime in cathedral shrine.
> While at a glib rate
> Their tongues would vibrate,
> But all their music were naught to thine."

Father Prout's words occurred to me, but now assimilated with the ecstasy of sound were fresh visions of verdant beauty.

On the left was a valley or glen into which from the surrounding hills a thousand rivulets tossed their way, falling with musical song into the lap of this fairy abode. Tremulous bending larches; lichen-covered rocks; laughing water-courses, all inextricably united to adorn this dingle of beauty. Nothing could excel its loveliness, its impelling enchantment, as my vision rested on its innumerable charms.

To the right was a noble mountain, gaunt, stern, and wild, its summit hidden in the clouds.

We came to the hamlet below, to a bridge where many waters met—rivers, living streams, and mountain torrents; all, like women, talking together at the same time, telling of their adventures as they came from their far-off homes on the heath, the moorland, and the mountains. Now in strong embrace they sallied forth to the sea, and thence to the great ocean beyond.

I turned away with my caravan to look for quarters for the night, and found them at the back of a hostelry. Here I looked after the well-earned wants of Drummer, giving him a stall as the weather appeared uncertain. As I was leading him there he rubbed his broad nose against my shoulder. I was pleased at the friendly nudge, but when he repeated it I was surprised. Did he want another apple? or—then I caught sight of his eye. Across the eyeball there was the remains of a great yellow horse-fly. This I carefully removed, and Drummer gave me the nearest approach to a smile I have ever received from a horse. Then I looked after Con and myself, and after the bad time we had had on the hills, we treated ourselves to a fine supper at the hostelry.

CHAPTER XX

WILD CAMBRIA

After supper Con and I, both well-satisfied animals, strolled through the little hamlet. A further examination confirmed me in the estimation I had formed of its beauty. Unfortunately the clouds were rather heavy, the tops of the mountains being hidden in them; but the sounds and odours of nature were everywhere apparent. Mountain torrents, rivulets, and waterfalls with their accompanying song being much in evidence, and myrtle, honeysuckle, pinks, and roses filling the air with their subtle perfumes.

I called on the constabulary, and told the sergeant of my escapade on the hills. He listened civilly, but told me it was out of his centre; he would, however, communicate with the officer in charge and apprise him of the incident, and that was the end of my adventure on the uplands.

In the early morning of the next day I took a stroll through the little village. All was quiet, the inhabitants being not yet astir, and as I contemplated all the beauties that lay before me I marvelled at its apparent seclusion and loneliness. Going to the little stone wall which overhung the river I saw on the banks below a heron fishing,

and with apparent success, for every now and then its neck would become distended as though some fish was making a journey down its gullet. When it saw me, it was only a few feet away; it sprang into the air, and flapping its great grey wings, mounted somewhat slowly and heavily, making eventually for the distant moors to the westward. I was sorry I had disturbed it, but very glad to have seen such a fine bird feasting in its wild state in our own waters.

I was so loth to quit the little haven of rest that I had fallen upon that I did not start until later than usual, and when we did, we were quite objects of interest to the little community. The road was level for a short distance, then gradually ascended, but its surface was so hard and firm that this did not seem to trouble Drummer, who pulled up the little rises without much apparent exertion.

Two or three miles out I saw a gypsy van standing by the roadside, and on coming up to it found it was Lovell's van. He said his "Rani" and "Chi" were at the falling waters, and as the thunder of the latter was plainly heard, I skidded my wheel, and asking Lovell to keep an eye on the van, hastened across the grass plot to the famous torrent. It was a stimulating spectacle; the waters, gathering in great force on the upper reaches of the river, were hurled like avalanches over rocks and boulders to a giddy pool below, the contact sending up and creating thousands of miniature cataracts and cascades, the reverberating echoes making a continuous roar of deafening sounds. Close to the edge I saw Mrs. Lovell and

her two children. After satisfying my vision with the remarkable water scene I turned to go back, when I instantly found myself assailed by the two Romany youngsters with their usual cries of "Lovo." I gave them something, then Mrs. Lovell seized hold of my arm.

"Let me tell your fortune, gentleman," said she. "This is a good place for a fortune to be told, and you are sure to have luck."

"Why, Mrs. Lovell," said I, "it is very early to commence 'dukkerin,' but I don't mind, if you will only be quick."

I crossed her hand with a shilling in the usual way. She took my hand, looked at the palm from every point of view, and truth to tell, she was not comforting.

"I suppose," said I, "I must keep all these awful secrets to myself, otherwise misfortune will befall me."

"Yes," she said, "you must keep them to yourself or misfortune will come." She stared at me from the depths of her restless dark eyes.

"Well," said I, "I don't know that the misfortune would be any worse than the fortune you have told me."

"The Romany must speak the truth," said she in a low grumbling voice, and then we came out on the roadway.

Con was almost choking himself with furious barkings at the proximity of the gypsy children, whom he uncharitably construed to have evil intent in their tiny fingers. On restarting I took Drummer's head, and Lovell joined me.

"Do you believe," said I, "that the thunder

of those dark waters holds the restless spirit of some great Welshman long since dead?" He turned his swarthy, intelligent face towards me.

"You know," said he. "Why do you ask me?"

"I want your opinion," said I.

"I do not know," said he slowly, "whose spirit it is, but it does hold a spirit, perhaps many. You cannot bury noise, it goes from the earth to the clouds. The thunder rolls from mountain to mountain; they are spirits playing."

"That is a very uncomfortable feeling," said I, "to think that whenever you are amidst great sounds you are in the midst of spirits. What about the noises of the seas?"

"They are the spirits of those who have perished in the great waters."

"And the winds?" said I.

"The winds are message bearers both for the Romany and the 'Gorgio.' On these mountains I will hear messages from my people who are scattered all over the earth."

As he finished a flash of lightning lit up the heavy clouds, then distant thunder was heard faintly rumbling.

"What do you make of that?" said I.

"Lightning is anger, and thunder is wrath. It is the voice of the Great Spirit."

We had arrived at the top of the rise. There was a sharp turn to the right.

"That is your way," said he, pointing towards it. "I am going straight on."

"Good-bye, Lovell," said I. "We may meet again some day. Good luck to you."

"Kosko Bokht, Gorgio Rye," said he gravely, and went straight on with his van.

I turned sharp to the right, and found that we had more rising ground before us, but the surface, as before, was so excellent that it presented no difficulties.

There was another flash of lightning, and after a lapse of some moments a distant rumbling of thunder. Hoping sincerely that both elements would keep at a distance, I led Drummer by the head and went on our way briskly. We at length reached the top of the rise; I got a momentary glance of a large sheet of water, an overhanging precipitous cliff, its top covered with clouds; a wild vegetation of bracken and mountain grass, and more mountains whose summits I could not see. We ourselves were over two thousand feet up; it was terribly lonely, no sign of life or habitation, the only sound heard was the rumble of distant thunder. Not knowing what might be in store for us, I decided on the midday meal. I did not unharness Drummer, simply releasing his bit and giving him a good feed of oats, beans, and fresh hay, with a drink afterwards. Con and I lunched in the van, and we had scarcely finished before we were assailed by more thunder and lightning. Phantom drums commenced to sound on the mountain tops. The sounds and gloomy prospect conjured up in the imagination the historic battles of the past, when the half-barbaric tribes of Britain issued forth from every defile and mountain pass to overwhelm and slaughter the hordes of Danes and Norsemen who coveted their hills, and later when the Welsh princes from their

fastnesses leaped forth and met the Saxons in the shock of battle—

> "Do you hear, like rushing billow,
> Wave on wave that surging follow
> Battle's distant sound?"

The sky was thickening and the visibility contracting rapidly. Then came a crash uncomfortably near. Drummer became restive. Throwing on a mackintosh, I rushed out to pacify him. The elements, or, in Gypsy Lovell's words, the wrath and anger of the Great Spirit, were upon us. Peal after peal of thunder crashed forth, giving back their awful echoes, playing wild tattoos on spirit drums on every crag and mountain top; rolling away with appalling reverberations into darkness and invisible space.

The scene was lit up by lurid flashes of electric fluid issuing like titanic flambeaux from the heavy clouds.

I became nervous for the safety of Drummer, knowing that the warmth of his body was an elementary danger. At every peal and every flash he tossed up his head and reared. Con, who had commenced by barking furiously, was now whining piteously. I longed for the rain to drop, knowing it would ease the situation. It came at last, though after weary waitings—came like the blessings of peace on an angry world. The lightning flashes were at longer intervals, and the thunder retreated, sullenly enough, into interminable space.

Thankful for our safety we restarted on our journey. It was still rather dark, but clouds were lifting. Puffs of wind came from the north and

showed me our way. What a desolate scene it was! rocks, mountains, precipices, and foaming restless waters, but the road was good and on a gentle slope downwards. We hurried along, fearful lest we should be held up by another similar experience. Wild, savage nature loomed out upon us, until at last intermittent explosions betrayed the presence of a cyclopedian amphitheatre or quarry, where men, like multitudes of human ants, laboured on the surface. Shortly after we arrived at a small village, that village where the grove of yew trees planted over two thousand years ago excites our wonder.

We passed that great pile of castellated buildings, recalling with vivid memory an eventful day many years ago when I interviewed its noble owner. I had asked for his presence at a lecture and demonstration I was giving to his quarrymen. He was gracious, and was acceding when a boy came to the door with a telegram. He opened it, turned pale, and showed it me; it ran, "Lord Beaconsfield died to-day," news which altered our plans.

We went on now through picturesque country, showing everywhere the kindly hand of a good landlord. Then smoke and church spires came into view, and shortly after we lumbered through the narrow streets of a quaint old town.

CHAPTER XXI

THE LAND OF BARDS

As we entered the town an interesting incident, indicative, perhaps, of the future relations which may prevail between the sexes, came before my notice. The roadway after the recent rain was very muddy, and a tall, muscular, masculine-looking lady, with a face suggestive of firmness and decision of character, together with a small, frail-looking young clergyman, apparently her husband, paused for a moment as they looked out for a crossing less muddy than the rest. This did not appear to be in sight. Then the lady, impatient of diagnosing, suddenly "stooped to conquer," and, catching hold of her diminutive and somewhat immature spouse around the waist, tucked him under her right arm and stalked across the mud. This was heroic, and would have been praiseworthy but for the regrettable circumstance that the lady had evidently not studied the science of equipoise or equiponderance, for while the head and hands of her lord and master were close to mother earth, his legs and feet kicked desperately towards high heaven. The lady, however, placed him the right end up when she reached the pavement, and walked off with him pretty much as a proud hen would with her ruffled chick. A

burly-waisted Welshman of middle age, who had witnessed the occurrence, looked at me and then at the retreating pair, ejaculating, in broken native accents—

"Well, now—in my teed, to pe sure. Now, mister," said he, addressing me, "what to you think of that for a newly-married cou-ple?"

"It would have been a greater feat," said I, "and easy enough for the lady, if she had thrown him across."

"Well, now—in my teed, to pe sure, so it would—tear me. Well! well!"

I inquired my way, which he pointed out to me, and in a few minutes my caravan was resting in a field at the back of a rather modern-looking inn, and for the next half-hour or so I was busy looking after Drummer, who seemed very relieved to find himself once more on a green pasture.

Con and I had supper in the coffee-room of the inn. We were alone for a few minutes, then gradually the room filled up, the new-comers, amongst whom was included my recent acquaintance, giving their orders in Welsh, which were accepted and responded to by a quick, keen-eyed serving-maid. They looked at me a little askance, and although I could not understand them I knew sufficient Cymraeg to know that my acquaintance was informing the company as to my credentials. They seemed to enjoy themselves, and were evidently telling each other stories which, at the conclusion, occasioned bursts of laughter. When my acquaintance approached me with a nod, I told him I was sorry I did not understand the Welsh language so that I might enjoy the

humour which they seemed to be throwing about.

"Well! well! in my teed, to pe sure; that man Elias Davies," pointing to a thin, spare man, "and that man Epenezer Chones," pointing to a stouter man in the company, "were hafing an argu-ment. They are puilders, cherry-puilders, to pe sure, and they poth puilt houses on the same hill and off the same material. Yes, to pe sure, to pe sure, off the same material. Then a storm tid come, and Elias Davies' house tid fall town. Yes, in my teed, tid fall town, and Epenezer Chones' house tid stand up, yes, to pe sure, tid stand up, and he tid say it wass pecause his work was petter, and then Elias Davies he tid say it wass pecause he had taken the precaution to plaster his walls with wall paper, which prevented them from falling town."

"Thank you," said I. "That is very interesting, and shows what a wise man Mr. Jones is."

"Oh yes, oh yes, to pe sure; he iss in my teed a very wise man, and I am glad that he has puilt our chapel, and that he has wall-papered it, for now it will not come town. No, in my teed, it will not come town, there iss no fear of that."

There was no more laughing, the last story having seemed to have left them cold in this department, or perhaps it was the near approach of the Sabbath, for they all seemed to pull themselves up and assume a more serious demeanour. Then some one suddenly started a Welsh hymn—at least I think it was a hymn from the solemn manner in which they sang it—and although there were only about a dozen voices, they sang

it in perfect unison, harmonising well, the bass, perhaps as it should be, predominating. Then they withdrew, and I went to my caravan and turned in for the night.

The following morning I was awakened by the clanging of bells. Not the same kind of musical bells which had given me such pleasure a couple of evenings before, but bells out to insist to the listening world their own peculiar notes or jarring sounds. Out in competition, insisting that their own particular chapel was the chapel *par excellence*, and should have the maximum amount of patronage. I hurried in my dressing, not wishing to be slothful where everything appeared to be alert and active, but when I went to the inn the maid informed me the bells were only for the early ones, and the proper bells would ring later on. I returned therefore and found Drummer already breakfasting off the bright green grass around him.

"Well, Drummer," said I, "this is the day of rest for man and beast, as it should be, and I must give you a special comb down and brushing, to say nothing of a sponge and a washing of your face." All this I am sure he understood and duly appreciated.

After breakfast, when the real time came for church going, there was a great ringing of bells, which this time included many of more power and dominating insistence. What a sight it was to see the solemn, serious faces of the people, dressed in sombre colours, the women in stiff, rustling silks, the men in black frock-coats an inch or two longer than those worn in England;

smiling clergy and grave dissenting preachers, the latter walking as though they were going to officiate at an execution. I went to a Welsh chapel to hear the Welsh singing, which was very fine. The service, which was in the same language, was a little extravagant, and elicited many groans and sighs from those who had abnormally sinned during the preceding week.

During the afternoon I received a call from a thin, serious-looking young man. He asked if I was Mr. Alexander, the physical director. I replied that I was, on week-days and in non-holiday times.

"Will you gif," said he, "an a-tress to the young men at Epenezer after chap-el this efening?"

"I don't give sermons or speak on religious subjects. My lectures deal with health or athletics."

"Yes," he assured me eagerly, "that iss what we want. You could wrap it up a little with Dafid and Goliath or Saint Paul; pesides, the men do not unterstand English, put they would pe so pleased to hear you."

This last argument weighed considerably with me. It was a novelty to please an audience which did not understand the speaker, so I went that evening after service, and found the large chapel crowded with young men. After being introduced in Welsh by my serious young acquaintance, I gave my address in English, and at its close received eulogies—I hope they were eulogies—in Welsh from two or three excited members—I think they must have been footballers—of the congregation.

I hope, however, that I said nothing that would tend to disturb their spiritual equanimity or make them indulge in additional groans on the next Sabbath.

On the following day the sun reassumed office and dispensed his favours in every direction, making everything drab look bright and millions of chilly raindrops into myriads of blazing jewels and countless gems. This had its effect upon me as upon all travellers, and as we were passing through a turnpike gate I, with some idea of pleasantry in my query, asked the tollkeeper "How much the robbery?" Instead, however, of being influenced, like myself, by the sun, he bridled up and attacked me with great volubility.

"How much the roppery! What do you mean by asking how much the roppery? Who are the roppers, I would like to know? Are they not the e-cles-iast-ical com-miss-ioners; they are the roppers who make us pay tithes to support their churches; they are the roppers; and the Gofernment too, who make us pay taxes pefore they allow us to eat, drink, or sleep; they are the roppers; and the clergy, who make collections, they are roppers; and the landlords, who make us pay ex-or-bitant rents, they are roppers——"

"Good morning," said I, handing him the cash. He did not reply, his countenance being still under choleric influence.

We were now wheeling along over delightful ground. Massive forest trees at the commencement, and then over undulating roads with wild hedgerows glistening in the sun like Aladdin's garden, or, at any rate, the avenue leading up to

his house. All day long this continued, passing occasional farmers, who, when they were assured of the respectability of our caravan, wished me "good day."

Passing through a small hamlet, I saw two men in violent altercation. One was a young man with rather long hair, and the other a big, robust man, apparently of the farming class. On my approach they somewhat calmed down, and finally separated, the young man walking in my direction, the elder one remaining at his cottage door.

"Good morning," said I, to the young man. "You appear to have had a little altercation with your friend."

"Yes, inteed. The fellow took me for an ordinary person."

"Oh," said I, "and are you an extraordinary person?"

"I am a musician," said the young man, with dignity, "and the fellow is a low farmer."

"Both," said I, "appear to be very necessary. One contributes to our creature comforts, and the other to our spiritual ecstasies."

"Yes, that iss so; and which iss best, I would like to know?" There was silence for some time; then the young man again spoke. "Do you know anything about music, sir?" he inquired.

"No," said I, except that I am extremely fond of it, and have heard the great artistes of the day, including Santley and Sims Reeves, and as a boy have spoken to Jenny Lind and Madame Titiens."

"Tear me! Tear me!" looking at me in wonderment. "What a great thing to pe aple to say! I wish I could say the same thing myself.

And what do you think of our Welsh singing? Haf you efer been to an Eisteddfod?"

"Yes," said I, "and was very charmed at the singing of the choirs. There is none that can touch your best choirs in fire, fervour, or attack; they are national characteristics, and are seen in your football or politics as well as in your singing. But your best choir cannot compete in beauty of sound, delicacy of treatment, or perfect articulation with the best Lancashire or Yorkshire choirs. The fault is owing to the universal deep guttural intonation of the Welsh, and, on the other hand, to the varied accents found in Lancashire and Yorkshire. The more varied the instruments, the better the orchestra."

"Tut, tut," said the young man. "I am surprised to hear you talk in that way."

"Well," said I, "if I am not right, how is it that the Eisteddfods always debar the great English choirs from entering for their chief prize?"

"Well, I ton't agree with you. Good-day." And he went up a garden path to a group of cottages.

We had our midday meal close by a national school, and during the playtime the schoolmaster came and interviewed me. He was a very intelligent-looking man, and excused his intrusion on the plea that in his lonely locality he met with very few people to talk to. He appeared very interested in the course of my journey, and patted Drummer and Con. When I told him of the little argument I had just had with the musician, he said that he quite agreed with me, and in a sense

he said the aptitude of the Welsh for music was a curse instead of a blessing.

"I have been headmaster of several schools," said he, "and very promising pupils, that would have done well in the Civil Service or Government departments of the country, have finished miserably as pierrots at some small seaside town."

CHAPTER XXII

OULD IRELAND

We continued our journey along a very fair road, for the most part undulating, crossing marshes and occasional bridges until we reached the town and harbour of Holyhead, from where I had decided to trust our caravan, the crew, and, lastly, myself to the raging waves en route for Dublin. I hope my readers will excuse me for not writing a cheerful account of the sea passage; I leave it to other writers. I had arranged by letter with a Dublin firm to take temporary charge of us until we had provisioned and were ready once more for the road. We were accordingly provided with room in a large yard near to the custom house, that is, all that was left of us, for we had not had a very pleasant voyage.

I proceeded at once with the provisioning of the van ere we steered westward, for previous experience of Irish roads convinced me of the wisdom of looking ahead in this respect. I then took a short stroll round Dublin. My connection with Trinity College, the R.I.C., and Dublin Gymnasium had secured me so many friends that it left me in a quandary where to commence and where to finish my calls; I determined therefore to call on

one friend only, especially as I wished to consult him about my route to the west. He was a remarkable man, and had filled more occupations and professions than any other half-dozen men I had ever met with. Years ago I had met him in England as Sullivanski, the Russian strong man, performing marvellous feats, I may say with the help of confederates, as he was only a small man. I met him again as a successful clairvoyant, in which I remember his principal feat was to choose a man with a thick head of hair, telling him that he had exactly one million, four hundred and fifty thousand, three hundred and seventy-five hairs on his head, and while these were being counted he would tell a racy story and then make his exit. Again I met him as a Theosophist lecturer, and again as a solemn-faced professional philanthropist, exacting money on commission from the idle rich to give to the starving poor, of which he was always a most prominent member. I have heard him speak at street corners on the wrongs of Ireland, and when I told him that he ought to be in Parliament, he said he had ambitions that way, and that he was seriously contemplating breaking a magistrate's windows and killing a policeman in order to improve his chances of election. It was this *multum in parvo,* whose Dublin address I had, that I now called upon at his lodgings in Talbot Street. A stoutish woman opened the door, and when I asked for Sullivanski-O'Brien, Monsieur Parditta, O'Grogan, Signor Luigi, Moriaty, O'Toole Murphy, and other names which I remembered he had used, the lady folded her arms across her ample bosom and said—

"I know the gentleman that yeer askin' afther, an' I wish I had him here meself, the blackguard! Makin' up to a poor lonely woman an' then leavin' her in the lurch, bad luck to him!" I saw I could get no information from this unsympathetic, irate female, and after thanking her, I turned into Sackville Street. I had scarcely done so when a tall red-faced soldier, a little the worse for drink, first saluted me and then throwing out his arms in Demosthenian fashion addressed the crowd as to my merits as an athlete. A crowd gathered on the pavement listening with interest.

"What name?" said I to the soldier.

"Rooney, sir," said he. "Sergeant Rooney, 18th Royal Irish."

"How do you do, Rooney?" said I, shaking hands. "I remember you quite well now."

"Ah! many's the bating he gave me in the ould days," said he, still addressing the crowd. One of his audience suggested that he should stand drinks in order to celebrate the meeting, and while he was dealing with this problem I bade him a hasty farewell and escaped.

Lower down the street a big, burly man with a jovial red face stopped me.

"Mester," said he, "can ta tell me whose statues them are?"

"Yes," said I; "that is the O'Connell statue."

"Aye," said he, "an' what did he do?"

"Catholic emancipation and a lot of things," said I.

"Aye," said he, "an' what's yond statue?"

"Sir John Grey," said I.

"Aye," said he, "an' what did he do?"

"Supplied Dublin with water," said I.

"Watter!" said he. "An' what's yond statue, that tall one wi yond chap on t' top?"

"Nelson," said I.

"Nelson! What, our Nelson! Well, I'm blowed! I didn't think they'd have him here."

"Best of them all," said I; "you'll find more if you want them, and, I say, what part of Yorkshire do you come from?"

"Yorkshire! How did ta know that? Why, I coom fra Bradford."

"Oh, then, you'll know Dick Hudson's, on the way to Ilkley."

"Dick Hudson's! well, I'll be blowed! Fancy meeting a gentleman i' these foreign parts as knows Dick Hudson's. Let me shake hands wi' you, sir." We shook hands. "Dash it, it do make me dry to hear you talk o' Dick Hudson's. Do come and have a drink, that is if you don't mind."

A couple of young gentlemen had stopped close to where we stood.

"I say, O'Flaherty," said one, "where do you keep your overdraft? I want you to cash a cheque for me."

"At the Ulster," said the other; "come along." They marched off. I did not accept my Yorkshire friend's invitation, but asked him to accompany me while I pointed out a few things to him. He had, it appeared, arrived on an excursion, and had lost his companions. I pointed out the principal buildings to him, Trinity College and the various statues, but what seemed

to impress him most was the stature of the huge policemen.

"They'd tak' some feeding, them chaps would, no sixpence-halfpenny dinners for them." I stopped a constable near Trinity College. He was about six feet six inches in height.

"Sergeant," said I, "this is an Englishman who wants to be introduced to you. He says he never saw so fine a man in his life before." They shook hands.

"There's bigger men than me at the barracks, sorr; you get them up to seven feet there."

"B'gum!" said the Yorkshireman. "It's a good thing the Government faad and clothe thi, it would tak all my brass if I had to do 't. Come an' have a drink, mester," said he, appealing to the policeman.

"No," said the latter, "it's on duty I am now, but afther I don't moind." I shook hands with them, leaving them to arrange the fixture, and departed, passing along St. Stephen's Green. At the corner of York Street, a young evangelist was addressing a small crowd.

"Ah! dear friends," said he, "I've been young once myself, and I know the temptations young men are subjected to."

I boarded a Rathmines tram and sat down inside. It was crowded. It stopped again, a lady came in and I gave my seat to her, retreating to the back steps, where a man was sitting.

"Ah!" said he to me, "it's not married ye are, or ye'd not be afther giving up yer sate to that lady."

"Ladies first," said I, "gentlemen afterwards."

"That was all right in the ould days, but not in these modern days when they take the bread and butther out of yer mouth."

I went upstairs, feasting upon all the old familiar spots, and without dismounting rode back to the city, then went back and had tea with my companions, who both brightened up at my appearance.

The dingy yard in which my caravan was located was not very prepossessing either in its appearance or in the salubrity of its atmosphere, but I resolved to stick it there with my companions and make an early start on the following morning. Later on, however, I went for a sharp walk before retiring, making my way to the Nelson column in Sackville Street. It was very late, the last trams had departed, and a very high wind played about the base of the column. As I surveyed down the comparatively empty street, two men approached in opposite directions, and when close to the column their hats went off into the air, gyrated and raced in contrary directions.

"Bless the saints!" said one, "which is mine?"

"I dinna ken," said the other, but he ran down Earl Street after a fast-disappearing bowler. The other ran along Upper Sackville Street. In a short time he returned twisting and turning and looking disgusted at a much-worn bowler.

"Well," said I, "did you get your hat all right?"

"No," said he, "nor never will."

"How is that?" said I.

"Well, it was a new one and it's a Scotchman

that ran afther it." He threw the old substitute into the roadway and went away grumbling.

I sat on the plinth of the monument musing on the "old familiar faces," then I spied a big policeman coming towards me. He looked at me suspiciously, walked past me, and then came back again.

"Ax yer pardon, sorr, but does yiz expect any one?"

"No," said I, "except yourself to have a bit of a chat with." He made no answer to this, but took in my bearings.

"It's all right, sergeant," said I, "I am quite harmless. I am just taking a look at the old familiar street. I suppose you are a young constable, or you would probably know me."

"What's yer name?" said he, "and where does yiz come from?"

"My name is Alexander," said I, "and years ago I was physical adviser to the Dublin police as well as to the R.I.C."

"Holy St. Malacky!" said he, "sure you're not Mr. Alexander, are yiz?" He stretched out his brawny hand, and we shook hands. "Ah, many's the time I've been under yer torture. Maybe that's a strong word for it, but in the ould days when we country lads came up to town and yerself came to Kevin Street Barracks and put us through our facings, Holy Mother! but we were shtiff and sore all through the noight and the next morning, too; but they were grand days, sorr, and I hope ye've come back to Doblin to agen look afther us a bit, sorr."

"No," said I, "I'm bent on pleasure this time.

I've got a caravan that I'm going to take along the roads to the west of Ireland."

"Is it a travelling pedlar ye are now, sorr."

"No, but I'm using a gypsy caravan to travel in."

"And does yiz slaap in it and get yer food there?"

"Yes; I have a bed, and a cupboard to keep the food in, and a reservoir to keep the water, and a stove to cook my meals, and a good horse to draw it along, and a dog for a companion."

"The Lord be praised! But what quare things they do nowadays, but aren't ye afraid of the 'bhoys' as ye go along? They're full of mischief the 'bhoys' are, and the country is in a very disturbed state."

"Well, I must take my chance about that. As far as my memory goes, it has always been in a disturbed state, and if I was to wait for better conditions I would have no travelling at all."

"Thrue for you, sorr, it's the thruth yer spaaking. Now tell me, sorr," said he, dropping his voice to a whisper, "what colour have ye painted yer van?"

"Green," said I, "green all over. Apple-green with white borders around the windows."

"Ah, ye're all right, sorr," said he in a relieved tone. "Ye see it's the national colour. It would never have done to have any red about the van; they don't like that colour, except it moight be on the wheels, that would be different, for then ye see the green would be above the red, and that's what the 'bhoys' are intint on."

"Good night, sergeant," said I, shaking hands.

"It's very late, and I am going to make an early start."

"Good noight, Mr. Alexander; I'll tell the 'bhoys' at Kevin Street I've seen ye. Good noight, sorr, and more power to ye."

CHAPTER XXIII

TEARS AND LAUGHTER

As we trundled along the quays on the following morning, the Liffey on our left and the Four Courts on our right, we were special objects of interest to the passers-by, who, after staring at us, would nod or shake their heads with some extravagant exclamation as to our sanity in driving along at that early hour, and in a living-box, when we might otherwise be "slaaping at home in paace." The river was not smelling well, and reminded me of the period when I attended the old Theatre Royal in Dublin, where the clown in the pantomime was wont to say, "In the twinkling of a jiffy I'll throw you in the odorous Liffey." What a famous theatre that was! How historic its operas with Titiens, Adelina Patti, and Sims Reeves; its dramas, "The Colleen Bawn" and "Green Bushes," and the interested and excited gallery audiences full of Trinity students and town "bhoys," who squabbled and fought at the slightest provocation! One night in particular came back to me. There was an execrable band which had to endure a running fire of gibes and sneers from the patrons of the gallery. A policeman was sent up to maintain order, but he, too,

was attacked and seized by the "gods," who threatened to throw him over into the pit. Things looked bad; the tension was electric, when suddenly a stentorian voice from the corner of the gallery shouted, "Don't waste him, kill a fiddler wid him," a remark which provoked much merriment, and an armistice was unconsciously signed.

But now we were approaching Chapel-Izod, with the famous Phœnix Park on our right, and the Liffey was already redeeming its character, becoming pure and even pellucid as we continued on our way. Indeed, the scenery along our route was remarkable for its fresh beauty—the Liffey, with its weirs, small islands, grassy and wooded banks, contrasting vividly with the tall forest trees on our right, and this continued for many miles.

We did not pass many itinerants, but I could not help comparing those whom we did with the usual road travellers in England. Here for the most part the men and women eyed us suspiciously, nodding their heads in a disparaging way, reflecting no doubt on the lazy, idle life the van suggested. Sometimes I got a "God save ye" from a man, and an exclamation in Irish from a woman; many of the latter, however, preferred to make the sign of the cross on their foreheads as they passed me, this being their usual method of protection against the influence of any evil spirits they might happen to meet with during the day. I passed a small cabin where women were weeping, wringing their hands, and uttering exclamations which I did not understand. I lingered near the spot, wondering

if I could be of any help to them, and hoping that they would accost me with this object; but their grief appeared to be their own, and we went on our way sorrowfully. But laughter and tears in Ireland are not very far apart, and when I stopped to ask a road-mender my way, he took off his wire protectors, displaying a pair of twinkling blue Irish eyes, and prepared to settle down at once for a gossip. Conversation is at all times difficult in Ireland, so contrary and vexatious are the questions of the day; indeed, you never are certain whether you will receive a smile or a scowl, a handshake or a blow on the head, you must be wary therefore in opening up the *pourparler*. This man, however, was only curious as to my mode of travelling, which seemed to interest him very much. He was a fine, stalwart fellow, and I expressed my surprise to him that he should be engaged in the work he was doing. A grin passed over his features. "Well, sorr, it's undther observation I am, an' the pollis won't allow me to lave the neighbourhood at prisint, an' moind ye it's all through me killing a floy."

"Killing a fly?" said I. "Why you ought to get recompensed for every fly you kill. They are a pest, and carry disease and illness wherever they go."

"That's just it, yer honour, that's what the docthor said, but it's all owing to Pat Doherty, bad luck to him! Ye see, he an' me we hate each other loike fallen angels, an' one day as I was passing him, he sitting on a haape of stones, I saw a floy marching across his ould skull, so I lifts up me 'blackthorn,' which I happened to

have wid me, bad luck to it! and down it came, mortally wounding the floy!"

"And what became of Doherty?" I inquired.

"That's just it. He's undther the docthor at prisint, an' I'm on bail here, waiting to see if he'll get betther." He looked at me sideways, a look of mischief in his blue eyes.

"Good day," said I, restarting Drummer, "but when I want to kill a fly I won't use a blackthorn."

"It kills them all roight," shouted the man, with a loud reckless laugh. Now although this incident might prove a tragedy, yet, like many other Irish incidents, it possesses a grim humour about it. I don't suppose this man intended me to regard his story as a bit of humour; on the contrary he wanted my sympathy for his predicament. As a matter of fact, humour is never far distant from the conversation of Irishmen, not because there is much humour in their remarks, but rather in the manner with which they inflict the gibe. The Irish football referee who kept in a glass case on his mantelpiece a brick and an ivy leaf always takes his hearers by surprise when he explains to them that the brick was thrown at him by a supporter of one of the clubs, and the ivy leaf, he always tells them, after a long pause, is from the grave of the man that threw it. Very nonplussed, too, was that magistrate who had a case of assault brought before him. The prosecutor appeared in court with his head bound up, and the defendant, a big lusty fellow, appeared accompanied by a wrinkled old dame, his mother.

When the charge was read out the old woman interposed with the remark, "Shure, my son, yer honour, only threw a bit of paper at him."

"Is that true?" asked the magistrate, looking severely at the prosecuting solicitor; but when the latter explained that the piece of paper contained a flat-iron, his worship regained his normal judicial equanimity. It is, indeed, in the naïve way of the telling of stories which the Irish adopt that the real germ of their humour lies, and yet within half an hour I was to see another phase of their ludicrousness. We had arrived on the outskirts of a small town; a lady resident had evidently engaged a hack from the livery stable for a constitutional ride. It was a sorry-looking beast and fireworks placed underneath would scarcely have persuaded it into a trot, yet, as the lady mounted, four unemployed jarveys left their cars on the stand and proceeded to the horse, one at each corner, and with ironical soothing voice and firm hand restrained the ardour of the animal as though it were a fiery Bucephalus. Their comments and movements made an absurd picture, but it did not prevent the lady, who saw through their nonsense, from giving them a bit of her mind, which she did in voluble and spirited fashion. I then came in for a bit of their scorn, and one fellow, seated on his car, a little more daring than the rest, gave Drummer a sharp cut with his whip, to "put some life into him" as he said. This so incensed me that I stopped the van, dismounted, and jumping on to the sidecar, knocked the culprit into the road. There was instantly a

hubbub, and as I jumped off, the man rushed at me with uplifted whip, but I laid him low again. Then the love of sport, which is never very far away from all Irishmen, asserted itself. "A ring, a ring," they cried. A small crowd gathered round, and the man, from a dozen advisers, was counselled as to his mode of procedure. He came on, hands and feet, and with the roar of a bull. As his feet were off balance I knocked him down once more, endeavouring to do so with as little injury as possible, but it was evidently enough, and the crowd, seeing this was the case, advised him to "go and have a dhrink" to get himself right again. I drove off without any further misadventure, and thought myself very lucky at escaping what might have proved an ugly fracas. Passing through the little town I halted a mile out on the other side and prepared the midday meal. This took a little time, but when it was over and I was engaged in washing up, I heard the sound of a galloping horse and the rumble of wheels, and looking through the upper half of my doorway I saw approaching us, in a cloud of dust, a sidecar. The driver was lashing his steed, and the goaded animal was racing furiously. On the near-side seat there was a nun, dressed in the incongruous habiliments of her order, holding firmly on to the rail. On the off-seat of the car, which passed next to me, there was a second nun who had one arm around a young child, a pretty little girl of about six years, whom she was endeavouring to hold securely. The little fairy smiled and waved her hand at me as they passed. I responded and followed them with my eyes until

they were out of sight. In a few minutes we were again proceeding on our way, I reflecting on the strange cavalcade I had just witnessed. I had thought it might have been a serious accident which they were taking to some local doctor, and was relieved to find this could not be the case. What, then, was the cause of this undue haste on such a hot day? My mind was still evolving this question when I saw a man approaching from a side road on my left. He was hastening along, pushing his bicycle before him. As he came near I saw that he was in a state of intense excitement. He ran up to me.

"For the love of God," said he, "have you seen anything of a young girl, six years old? She has been stolen from me and my sister." He was a man of middle age, medium size, stout, and blue-eyed.

"Yes," said I, "about half an hour ago I saw a little girl, a pretty little girl of about six years, on a sidecar in company with two nuns, and the horse was galloping at a great rate."

"That's it," said he; "my fears are realised. What shall I do? What shall I do?"

"Why don't you mount your machine and follow them?" I suggested.

"I've had a fall, and the crank is bent."

"We'll soon put that right," said I, and, dismounting, I took out my box of tools. While I was straightening the crank the man, with tears running down his honest face, gave me in disjointed sentences the gist of his story.

The little girl, he said, was the child of a sister who had made a mixed marriage, the husband being a Catholic and the wife a Protestant. Both had died, leaving the little girl in the charge and keeping of himself and another sister, to whom it had proved a great source of happiness; and all went well for a couple of years, until that very morning, when the little girl, playing at the front of their garden gate, was lifted on to a sidecar and driven off. In about half an hour's time, as the child did not come in to dinner, he went out to look for her, but could find no trace of her. At length some one told him that he thought he saw a child in the company of a couple of nuns who were riding on a sidecar, and were apparently making off in the direction of Dublin. "What shall I do?" he went on. "What shall I do?"

"Would it not be better," said I, "to take the train to Dublin and anticipate their arrival?"

"There won't be a train for an hour yet," said he gloomily.

"Then wire to the detective department in Dublin to watch the boats, for they may take the child over to England."

"I couldn't trust the telegraph clerks," said he, shaking his head, "they are all in league with each other. The country is getting into a nice state when a man's only ewe lamb can be stolen from him in broad daylight." And tears again commenced to flow.

"Well, here you are, the crank is all right now; you must make the best of your way to Dublin

and go direct to the detective department of the police, and tell your story." He thanked me with some emotion, and after exchanging cards he mounted his machine, and was soon following on the trail.

CHAPTER XXIV

A MOVING DAY

For some time my mind was occupied with the strange incident I had just witnessed. How any one under the cloak of religion could steal a young, happy child from its lawful relations and protectors passed my comprehension. It made, indeed, so deep an impression upon me, that, in spite of Mr. M——'s derogatory opinion of telegraphic officials, I wired from the next post office to my friend Mr. Williams, chief of the detective department at Liverpool, asking him to look out for the arrival of the child and her pseudo-guardians and locate them, pending the arrival of the uncle and aunt. Perhaps it might be as well to explain here that he did this, tracing the child to a small stationer's shop in the suburbs of Liverpool; the two nuns, having left her there, repaired to a local convent. Mr. M—— and his sister had meanwhile followed the clue to Liverpool, and called upon Mr. Williams, who advised them to call, accompanied by a detective, and take possession of their little one on the following morning. They did so, but found to their sorrow that their little niece had gone, the occupier of the small shop refusing to give any information. It was subsequently

ascertained, however, that the nuns, with their charge, had left by the night mail for Scotland, and in due course Mr. Williams informed the anxious searchers that the child had been located at a convent near Glasgow. Mr. M—— and his sister at once started for that city, and, accompanied by a detective, visited the convent in question. They were, however, informed that the child was no longer there, and were refused any further information. This necessitated a long and weary search, but their efforts were at last rewarded by discovering their little one at a lonely convent in the Highlands. The Reverend Mother, however, refused to give her up, and the M——s returned to Glasgow in order to substantiate and enforce their legal claim. This took some little time, and, when at last they, accompanied by a detective, again visited the convent, they found their niece had flown, and, as usual, they were refused any information. The uncle then placed the matter before the notice of the Ulster M.P.'s, and for the next few weeks there were lively interchanges of compliments between these gentlemen and the Nationalists in the House. Public opinion, however, forced the Government to move in the matter, and in a month or two afterwards its agents, assisted by those of the U.S.A., discovered the little one at a lonely and solitary convent in the Rockies. Here they took possession, and on her arrival at Liverpool the little wanderer was received into my house, where she remained with her uncle and aunt until they felt they were able to take her away in safety. Such is the brief history of Violet M——, and

very delighted we were to hear the prattle of the pretty little fairy as she recounted her adventures to us.

After sending my telegram off we continued our journey along the very uninteresting road. We met with no villages for some considerable time, and the farms that we passed appeared to turn their backs upon us with their accompanying pigsties, whose odour took the place of that of climbing roses. The wild hedgerows, however, which were never trimmed, and were now full of wild blossoms, made some amends for the absence of gardens. The sweet scent of climbing rose, the rich odour of honeysuckle, the flowering upright foxgloves, and the flaming patches of many another gaudy weed made a brave attempt to counteract the work of man.

I halted for a few minutes to allow Drummer to nibble at a few tit-bits, and to have a game with Con, who, like any small boy, was always ready for a bit of excitement and fun. He was chasing a ball for me, bringing it back many times with much satisfaction at his own sagacity, then tiring, he commenced to chew grass, daintily picking out the blades of wild sorrel whenever he could find it, and I, nothing loth, joined in. We were all engaged in this primitive pastime when Con uttered a low growl, and extending one paw in front, raised his head in the attitude of listening.

"What is the matter, Con?" said I. "There is no one coming, you silly dog; go on chewing your 'green-sauce,' and then we'll have to make a move." Con, however, continued to growl, and

looking round I saw, some distance up the road along which we had already travelled, the figure of a man.

"Well, Con," said I, giving him a pat, "you were right after all; you have sharper ears than your master, that's certain." The man, when he came up, proved to be a soldier. He was of medium size, and had a good-natured look upon his typical Irish face. As we were travelling in the same direction, I asked him how he liked service in the army.

"It's all roight, sorr, if ye haven't any attractions elsewhere. Now I done me best not to go in the army, but ye see I was in the resarve."

"But what objections have you to the army? It seems a good way to see the world, inexpensive, and you gain experience. It's right for a few years, anyhow."

"I'm not saying a word agin the army, but there were raisens;" and he looked at me with a broad smile on his face.

"What were they?" I inquired.

"The ould story," said he, "just a bit of a girrl. 'Tim,' ses she, 'if ye go into the army ye'll be killed,' and she sets to weeping and wailing and goin' on till I nearly started meself. 'Mary,' ses I, 'I'm goin' before the Captain to-morrow, and I'll thry and get out of it for your sake! This plazed her moightily, and so the next day when I went before the Captain, he ses, 'Well, me man, aren't ye glad to sarve in the army for yer king and counthry?' 'Faith, I am, if I were only fit,' ses I. 'Fit,' ses he, 'why yiz look all roight;

ye have a foine chest.' 'I've a good chest,' ses I, 'only for the wake heart that's inside it and a moighty bad cough that kapes me awake all the noight.' 'Ye surprise me,' ses the Captain, 'but ye have a good appetite.' 'Sorra an appetite; I can't ate or dhrink, being delicate down in those ragions.' 'Ye astonish me,' ses the Captain. 'Are yer limbs roight?' 'Roight as a trivet,' ses I, 'if it were not for the ague and rheumatics that kapes me jumpin' about.' 'I never heard of such a case,' ses the Captain. 'What about your taath and eyesoight?' 'Me taath are all roight, yer honour,' ses I, 'if it were not for the taathache and neuralgia that makes me walk up and down the flure loike a raging lion; as for the soight, it plays me quare thricks. I can't make it out at all.' 'Stand over there,' ses the Captain, then he houlds up a plate. 'What is this?' ses he. 'A threepenny bit, yer honour,' ses I. 'Dear me!' ses he. Then he houlds up a billiard ball. 'What is this?' ses he. 'A pill, yer honour,' ses I. Then the Captain he looked sevare at me. 'My man,' ses he, 'it's my belafe ye are malingering.' 'Mary lingering?' ses I. 'Does yer honour mane that herself is waiting for me?' 'Look here, me man,' ses the Captain, looking moightily sevare, 'do ye belave in spirits?' 'Spirits,' ses I, 'does yiz mean angels or whisky, yer honour?' 'Go to that sideboard,' ses he, 'and fill yerself out a glass o' whisky and dhrink to the health of yer king and counthry.' Well, o' course I couldn't resist that, so I did what I was told, and foine stuff it was too. 'Now,' ses the Captain, 'I've a good moind to have ye shot

for not spaking the thruth, but as ye appears to be in love, I give ye four days' lave to go and see yer girrl.' So here I am on me way home, and, begorra, it's meself that will have throuble with Mary Dwyer when she saas me."

"You'll soon make it up with her," said I. "Tell her the army is waiting specially for you before it can fight the enemy; tell her you will come back with stripes on your arm and wearing a medal, with all your money safe in the bank."

"That's good advoice," said he, "but I'm afraid ye don't know Mary Dwyer. She's very hard to plaze, is herself. Now, if I had ye alongside me to back me up whoile I was spaking to her, it would be all roight. I suppose yer honour wouldn't come with me now? It's just up that lane where that red cow is looking about to see if I'm coming. She belongs to Mary, does the baste."

But I declined the invitation, and bade him be of good cheer as he turned up the lane, a shaking figure in company with the red cow that had been sent to look out for him.

We pursued our rather solitary road, meeting with many pigs, cows, and horses that were apparently turned out on to the road to feed on the wild luxuriant grass with which it abounded. As tea-time approached, we came to a fairly large village, where I had some thoughts of staying for the night, but I was not very enamoured with the prospect, and passed through it amidst a great clamour of howling dogs and unruly children. I stopped, however, about a mile outside, and,

pulling on to a piece of spare grass, prepared supper and made all right for the night. When this was finished I lit my lamp, as it was getting dark, and did a little reading. It was now quite dark outside. "Con," said I, "it's time we were abed. Here you are, jump in," and I pushed his little basket towards him; but Con, instead of obeying orders, raised up his right paw and, with head erect, appeared to be listening. He then commenced a faint growling, culminating into short barks. It was a sign of some one approaching, but it was quite three or four minutes before I myself heard light footsteps, then came a timid knock at the door. I at once went forward, opened the upper half of the door and looked out. It was quite dark, but below me, by the aid of the caravan lamp, I saw the figures of two young women.

"Hallo!" said I. "What is it?"

There was silence for a few moments; then a hesitating voice said faintly, "We want our fortunes told."

"Oh!" said I, "you have made a mistake this time. I am not a gypsy, nor do I tell fortunes. You'll have to dream your own fortune when you get to bed, but instead of believing the dream, your fortune will probably be the reverse of it, bear that in mind."

"Thank you, sir," said a duet of voices, and the female forms silently made off; but even after this incident I was not destined to sleep soundly, for after I had retired to rest, attracted no doubt by the barking of Con, I received volleys of stones on to the side and roof of the van. The

loud drunken laughter told me that it was useless expostulating, so I had to lie down, to grin and bear it until daylight—a very uncomfortable experience. Eventually, however, the drunken marauders went away, and we were left in peace.

CHAPTER XXV

A NIGHT RAID

As I was looking at the scars and knocks which the caravan had received from the stone-throwing of the previous night, and wondering what T—— would say at the marred beauty of his beloved van, I saw a Catholic priest walking slowly down the road. He was a stout, comfortable-looking man, with a pleasant jovial expression of countenance. He gave me a "good morning," which I returned.

"Have you had an accident?" said he.

"No," I replied, "but last night, when I was in bed, my van received several volleys of stones, and I am just looking at the damage."

"Ah! I see," said he. "Well, the boys meant no harm, I'm sure, and a bit of paint here and there will soon put you right again. The boys are very frisky these times, it's a marvel they did not break your window. Things might easily have been worse for you."

"Yes," said I, a little nettled at his complacency, "it might easily have been worse; they might have razed it to the ground, made a bonfire of it, and stoned the occupants."

"Oh, they're not so bad as all that. All the same, if I had been here I would have laid my stick about them."

"Thanks," said I, "I hope you will be about the next time I receive similar attention."

"Where are you bound for?" said he. "I suppose you are on pleasure?"

"I am bound for the west coast, and I certainly came over here on pleasure, but I cannot say that I have experienced much since my arrival."

"Oh, well, you'll have better luck yet, but why don't you stay at some hotel? You could put up your van in the yard at the back, and then you would be quite safe."

"I don't think the air and surroundings would be quite so congenial as they are in the open."

"True, true; but I was just thinking of your eating and drinking. Hello! There's that blackguard Fogerty." He looked across the hedge at a man crossing the field. He was a big, loose-limbed young man of about twenty-five years, with a ruddy, cheerful face, and, carrying a spade in his right hand, he came on unconscious of the priest's presence, whistling a tune. As he was getting over the fence he saw the priest, and at once lifted his battered hat.

"Ah, Michael," said the priest, "you're the very boy I wanted to see; I've good news for ye."

"Indade, your Riverence, and what moight that same be?" The man stood awkwardly, fumbling with his hat.

"Just this, Michael, I've got a bride for ye."

"Holy St. Patrick!" said the man, turning pale.

"A good, souse-looking colleen as ever ye saw," said the priest.

"Holy St. Michael!" ejaculated the man, beginning to shake.

"Blue eyes and good teeth; there's freckles, of course, but——"

"Holy St. Peter!" said the man, looking more uncomfortable than ever.

"Ye will have two cows and two pigs, and maybe a sack of potatoes thrown in," said the priest.

"Holy St. Joseph!" murmured the man to himself, trembling like a leaf.

"Igh! ye might well call on the saints, ye ungrateful spalpeen, and is this all the thanks I'm getting for all the trouble I've taken over ye? But I'll want more from ye, for I've kept the best news to the last. It's twenty pounds she will have, too, and I want my commission, remember. Now ye may go. Come to Angelus this evening, and I'll see ye about it." The man put on his hat, lifted it again and moved off, the picture of abject misery.

"You don't appear to have made him very happy with your communication," said I. "Are you really in earnest?"

"Earnest!" said the priest, looking a little stiffly at me, "of course, I'm in earnest, and thankful he ought to be to have a priest that looks after his welfare. Calling on the saints, indeed! such ingratitude! I never heard the like."

"So you really arrange marriages for your flock?" said I. "Do you find it a good plan? How does it work out at the finish?"

"Of course we look after their marriages, who else is there to do it for them if we don't?

The boys are too fond of gallivanting, and sport, and drinking, ever to think about it themselves, and the girls, well, they can't insist on it, and so there would be no marriages."

"Do they live happily together afterwards?" I inquired.

"Happily together!" echoed the priest, "why of course they do, far better than they do in England or any other country where they are always having divorces and separations; there's none of that here. Now the girl I've got for Michael Fogerty, she's quite a decent girl, and when he sees her he'll like her right enough, and they'll have a happy married life together. Well, now I must be off, but I still advise you for safety's sake to place your van every night in the yard attached to the hotel. Never mind the smell, that's a mere trifle;" and with a cheerful "good morning" he walked towards the village.

As I harnessed Drummer and pulled the van out on to the road I could not help comparing the difference in physique and manner between the priests in Ireland and those in England. In the former country they usually appeared to be sleek, comfortable, smiling, and autocratic, whereas in England they seem more of the scholar and less of the master; maybe the different conditions existing in the two countries require, and perhaps even develop it, and yet as I walked alongside Drummer, with little Con frisking about my feet, I could not help contemplating with some satisfaction our state of freedom with that of poor Michael Fogerty as the news of his approaching honeymoon was broached upon him for the first

time. I have no doubt that many such marriages are made in Ireland, and, speaking generally, they appear to turn out well, for, kept away from the whisky, Irishmen as a rule make good husbands, and Irishwomen faithful, devoted wives and mothers.

Our road continued very good, being almost dead level. The surface, however, was not good, and by reason of the large numbers of cattle using it, was kept in a dirty condition; as a result we had more than our share of flies, especially of the yellow horsefly, which paid particular attention to Drummer's ears, who was very disgusted by their invasion. Later on I managed to rig up a kind of shield made of muslin, which gave him quite a coquettish appearance, and, of course, made him the butt of all the youthful wits in the various hamlets we passed through, but as it saved him some annoyance, neither he nor I minded these humorous attempts on the part of the youngsters. If they had kept to their verbal sallies no harm would have been done, but I am sorry to chronicle that the appearance of a caravan in any of these Irish villages seemed to be the signal for stray shots of stones, amounting in some cases, where ammunition was plentiful, to a fusilade or volley. None of their elders seemed disposed at any time to restrain the ardour of their progeny and looked on with amusement and complacency. Of course, this is only a small matter, but I could not help reflecting that in a journey through central Africa, a caravan would probably be treated with greater respect; and yet there is another side to the character of the Irish which I must hasten to

acknowledge. We had stopped opposite the gate of a large farm, and while preparing dinner a buxom country girl came hurrying from the farm with a large plate of potatoes boiled in their jackets, with a spoonful of salt on the edge of the plate.

"The misthress ses ye're to ate these praties," she panted, "and when ye've finished lave the plate on the sod, and I'll come back for it."

"Thank your mistress very much," said I; "but I hope she will allow me to pay for them."

"Not loikely," said the girl, "and if yiz mention it she'll be angry; but aren't ye a gypsy?"

"No," said I, "only a traveller." She looked hard at me, then flew back. The potatoes were splendid, and there were so many of them, that Con and even Drummer came in for a share. I did not leave the plate on the sod, but went to the farm and thanked the "misthress" for her thoughtfulness and good nature. She seemed a little flustered at my thanks, and asked me would I like a drink of milk.

"I would like to beg a little drink for my dog," said I; "he comes of a breed that are fond of milk." She seemed surprised at the request, and brought a jug with two glasses, evidently imagining that Con could quaff it off in a single draught. I begged a saucer for him, however, and when the master, as well as the dog, drank it with much enjoyment, she appeared very pleased. With a smiling "good-day," I continued my journey, the road continuing to be of the same character as before, and as I passed through the various hamlets and villages and looked at the inns or hotels they contained, I could not reconcile myself

to spending the night even in my van in the yards at their rear. I determined, therefore, to keep a sharp look-out for a solitary lane or piece of common where I could camp peacefully for the night. I had passed through a rather large village, receiving the usual fusilade of stones, and I hurried on. The land outside the town appeared to be given up to grazing, as there were large numbers of cattle upon it, but I at length came to a bit of common upon which a good crop of stones lay thickly about, and as there appeared to be no habitation or any humans about "my right to dispute," I wheeled on to the common, hoping to have a quiet, restful night. After supper, and looking after the welfare of Con, I lit my lamp and commenced to read, but Con was uneasy, whimpering and whining as though some one was approaching.

"Quiet, Con," said I; "is it the moon behind that dark cloud or that wailing wind that annoys you? Be a good dog and go to bed." Con leaped into his basket and I returned to my reading. The dog, however, once more commenced to growl, and I myself this time thought I heard the cracking of a twig. It was now late and dark, but I went to the door, opened it, and stood on the shafts listening and peering into the darkness, but I could not see or hear anything. The dog, however, continued to express its dissatisfaction. I turned to quiet him, when suddenly to my astonishment I heard a rush of feet, and a couple of shots were fired. I turned quickly round, the dog barking furiously; the doorway was filled with masked men. There were other

forms outside half hidden in the gloom. They were all armed, and the central figure raising his revolver, shouted "Hands up, we've come for arms."

"You'll find none," said I, "except those attached to my shoulders."

"Hands up," the man roared, "and none of yer nonsense." For a moment the thought flashed through my brain to turn, seize my sword, only a couple of yards away, and do the best I could with it, but the voices grew menacing. "Shoot him," said several, "and don't waste time." I saw the gleaming of their barrels, and, much against my will, capitulated, holding up my arms. The men made a rush, but just as they looked dangerous, and I was mentally saying good-bye to the van and all its contents, the stentorian voice of the leader roared out the magic word "Halt. Get back, men," said he, "we've made a mistake; this gintleman is a friend of the Archbishop's, a friend of John Redmond's, and one of the best friends Ould Ireland has iver had." The intruders, followed by their leader, hurriedly left. He was haranguing them in forcible language. I took a couple of steps backward to my bedroom and seized my sword. As I returned the leader rushed in. I raised my weapon, there was a loud laugh, and the man tore off his mask.

"Good heavens, Sullivanski," said I, "what's the meaning of this foolery?" He laughed again, holding out both hands. My sword clattered to the ground.

"Cead mille failthe," said he, as we grasped hands.

"That's all very well," said I, "but you've a queer way of showing it."

"I'll explain everything to your satisfaction," said he, "but I must return to the bhoys or there'll be more throuble. Now, which way are ye thravelling?"

"Westward," said I, "to the west coast."

"That'll do. Now, can yiz give me a lift if I maat ye in the morning?"

"I shall be glad," said I, "but can't you stop and explain things a bit to me?"

"Divil a shtop, but I'll maat ye at the cross-roads in the morning. If I'm not there, wait till I come." He turned quickly and vanished in the darkness.

For a time an inhospitable wailing wind brought me imaginary and ghostly altercations, and Con in his basket plaintively whined in his broken sleep.

CHAPTER XXVI

"FATHER" BRADY

NEXT day, after little or no sleep, I was early astir, for I had mapped out something over twenty miles for our day's journey. I was in a part of the country that had recently obtained an unenviable reputation for lawlessness, and I was naturally anxious to steer clear of its turbid waters. I therefore slightly altered my course, wondering if I should meet again my quondam friend Herr Sullivanski, or, to give him his rightful name, Harvey Sullivan.

We had been half an hour on the road without seeing the cross-roads, and I was beginning to think that his suggested "tryst" was more the result of excitement than of reasoning, when at last I saw the roads in the distance. As far as I could see there was no one there. A priest was coming towards me, and I returned his salutation, then a grin on his features made me look again. It was Sullivanski.

"Hello, Sullivanski!" said I, "is that you? But what is the meaning of your clerical attire?"

"Just to make our journey aasy," said he, scrambling into the van, "for ye see when the bhoys see that ye are in company with a rispictable praast, ye can have the road to yerself, and all

that's in it. Now would yez moind shtopping at the cross-roads ?"

"What for ?" said I, "there is no one here." I stopped, however, and he jumped out, going behind a hedge, and in a moment reappearing with a goodly-sized portmanteau, with which he again clambered into the van. "Now, Sullivanski," said I, "you must explain yourself. Of course, I shall be glad to give you a lift or help you in any way I can, but first I should like to know whom I am helping or travelling with."

"With 'Father' Brady, who else ? and ye'll have to take his word for it, me son ; as for that affair of last noight, bad luck to it ! I was simply driven into it, and now I'm running away from it and ye are helping me to do so."

"Well, certainly I was surprised to find you in such company. I should say by doing so, you have placed yourself within the pale of the law."

"Don't I tell ye that I was forced into it. And if I had not promised to laad them, O'Gorman would have done so, and then there would have been bloodshed, for the bhoys were poining for the soight of a broken shkull. Now, as it was, I made up a foine excuse the viry first thing we dhropped upon, which was yerself, shtrangely enough, though we were out for bigger things. Well, ye heard my excuse, and saw how I got them away, and there's an ind of that."

"But how did you get in their company ?" I persisted. "The last time I saw you, you were quite a respectable philanthropist, and in fact, had some notion of getting into Parliament. I distinctly remember you telling me that you

thought of breaking a magistrate's windows and killing a policeman in order to advance your claims."

"Ah, yes; but thim toimes are gone by. It's the Lord-Lieutinant's windows ye'd have to break now, and kill a couple of inspectors, or a chief secretary maybe, before ye'd shtand any chance in these toimes. I soon found that out afther spaaking to one of the patriots; ye see the competition's greater now, and thinn, afther that, me luck saamed to lave me intoirely"—here he gravely returned the salute of a passing farmer. "Well, I drifted and drifted, for ye see I'd been subscribing to the National Fund pritty heavy, thinking o' coorse I was going into Parliament, thinn when they turned me down, I wint into the spirit business—not the dhrinking, worse luck! but the *séance*. I had a foine maadium; she could talk foinely with her ankle bones undther the table in the spirit rapping, so I took a big hall which took all me money, and thinn, begorra! what do ye think, the maadium, that all me hopes were on, came up bloind dhrunk and gave the show away. Of course there was a hullabaloo, and I barely iscaped with me loife. Thinn I troied to git up the shtrong business, but I had no capital to pay me assistants, and so I drifted on until I found meself in Glaskee, the worst place in all the universe to be in when ye're hard up. At last, afther being starved to death, I got a job as a mandarin——"

"A mandarin, Sullivanski? A mandarin?"

"Yis, a mandarin, one o' thim Chinese haythens with a tail hanging down his back

from his shkull. Well, I had to say all sorts o' gibberish, which the people thought was Chinese, and invite thim into the shop to buy taa, so I drissed up and dyed me face with yillow ochre and, as I couldn't rimimber the gibberish I introduced Irish, and that plazed them so well"—he again returned the salute of some passing peasants—"that they gave me thirty shillings a waak and a packet o' taa on Saturday. Then, bad luck to it! me timper got the bist o' me. One day there was some blackguards passing who used insulting language to me, so I makes for thim, and we had a foight on the pavement, and in the tussle me ould pigtail came off and gave the show away, so the taa merchant, he paid me off. Thinn I drifted agin to Glaskee Green and joined a thravelling theatre, and whin I saved up me fare I came back to Ould Oireland and joined a society that saamed to have plinty of money, but what I did there ye had betther be ignorant of; if ye ask no questions ye'll be tould no lies."

"I'm afraid you're a bad quantity, Sullivanski, a 'rolling stone that gathers no moss,' and even now I feel that this new guise of yours, to wit, the Church, will bring you into trouble."

"Niver fear, I'm all roight. To tell the thruth, I couldn't be contint with the position of one man, I'm too full of thoughts and ideas to put up with it, that's why I sample so many professions to see what they're loike; and ye needn't be afraid of me clerical costume, there's no Act o' Parliament agin it, and I could dhress up loike the Lord Chancellor and walk through the straats without interference, if I'd a moind. It all depinds on the

motive, and moine is paace and goodwill, shure enough."

We were approaching a fairly large town, the streets of which were excessively dirty. Sullivanski took the reins from me.

"I'll just dhroive ye through here," said he. "I know the place; it's as full of cattle as flies in a jam-pot. There, look how the little darlints are bobbing and curtseying to 'Father' Brady, and if I wasn't in this paaceful driss, shure it's stones they'd be throwing at us, the young blackguards!"

We soon cleared the town, but found it difficult to avoid meeting the cattle, which seemed to be arriving from all the roads surrounding the place.

Our passage was difficult, for some of the beasts were awkward and unruly, and the drovers a savage and vituperous set of men. I think I must own that I should have had considerable trouble in getting through these wild obstructions but for the presence of "Father" Brady, who steered, shouted, advised, threatened, and blessed as the occasion merited, and who at last, after receiving apologies *ad libitum*, piloted us safely into the open and free country beyond. Here we prepared our midday meal, in which I found Sullivanski an admirable cook and handy man.

"I'm thinking," said he, "that I moight have left ye at the last town. I could have taken the thrain for Galway or Sligo——"

"Galway or Sligo? I thought you wanted to get to Dublin?"

"Not at prisint; the society's agents would be looking out for me, and I would have to explain me disappearance to them."

"Ah, that reminds me. I called at your lodgings in Talbot Street when I was in Dublin, and inquired after you. The lady who came to the door seemed to think that you were an absentee —er—something. She seemed to think that you were wanting in those acts of chivalry which she had a right to expect from one of your sex to one of her own—to, in fact, herself in particular."

Sullivanski stared at me, then crossed himself.

"May the Holy Virgin privint me from saying one word agin that lady; but of all the faamales I've come across in a loife of toil and suffering, aase and plinty, fortune and misfortune, she is, without doubt, the most abominable, ditistable, exicrable, cursed, villainous, diabolical and degraded faamale of her sex. Why!"—he looked around and above him—"there's not room here for me to ixpriss me abhorrent detestation of her scurrilous, malignant, and corrupt influence on man, and meself in particular."

"You did not inspire the poet then to say 'Two souls with but one single thought, two hearts that beat as one!'"

"Holy St. Patrick! did yez ever hear the loike? The man that wrote thim words is a fool, shure enough. All poets should be vaccinated and licensed by the docthor, for at prisint they go about loike harmless lunatics."

"Well, Sullivanski, if you are bound for Galway or the west, why not travel with me? This caravan is divided into three parts. My bedroom is at the back, the dining-room and kitchen are in the centre, and this is the spare bedroom. All can be separated or thrown into one, and if you care

to put up with the rough and tumble of it, I shall be delighted to have you as my guest."

Sullivanski rubbed his chin thoughtfully.

"It's a thing I'd loike," said he at last. "Two or three days would make no difference to me, as long as I'm aating and dhrinking and slaaping, and in the open air, but yiz would allow me to pay me share of the ixpinses? I wouldn't consint without doing that same."

"Just as you please about that. I only thought of having the pleasure of your company."

It was a fortunate compact for me, for rarely have I come across such an enjoyable companion. He proved a most willing worker, had a most extraordinary faculty for getting out of scrapes, and a spontaneous humour that was very entertaining. During the remainder of that day's journey he was invaluable in exacting favours from the roadside farms that we passed. I am afraid his costume helped him considerably, for he certainly came back loaded with various titbits to adorn our table. When I expressed a hope that he was not presuming too much on his reverend appearance, he said—

"It's a raal pleasure for them to give it," and, judging from the smiling faces that surrounded us occasionally, he certainly was correct in his conclusion.

CHAPTER XXVII

AMONGST THE BOGS

"FATHER" Brady was laughing at me. I had been visiting an old man, I have always been partial to old people's society, and when a cottager told me that a very old man lived about half a mile further up the road I stopped the van and handed the reins to "Father" Brady.

There was an old man at the door smoking a clay pipe. He was quite grey, but did not look extremely aged.

"I have been told that you are very old," said I. "I like talking to old people. Do you mind telling me what is the farthest thing back you can remember?" The old man looked at me.

"Ye maan the ould gintleman insoide," said he, jerking his head towards the door. "Walk in and see himself."

"Oh, thanks," said I, and I passed in through the doorway. There was a very old man sitting down by the turf fire, he too was smoking, and a woman at the far side of the cottage sat mending stockings.

"Good morning," said I to the very old man.

"I understand you are very old. Now do you mind telling——"

"Ye maan me father," said he; "ye'll foind him in the room there beyant," and he jerked his head towards the door of an inner room. I hesitated, then, as the door was ajar, I walked towards it and looked in. This time there was a very, very old man resting on a bed. I walked over towards him.

"I understand," I began, "that you are very——"

"Ould Michael's in the shed," said he in a feeble voice, and he jerked his head towards a door.

"Oh!" said I, feeling a little bewildered, but determined to go on with the venture, I passed through the door; there was a shed adjoining the dwelling. It was dark, but I groped my way towards what I conceived to be a bed. There was somebody lying on it covered with a white sheet. I began my speech, but there was no response.

"Good-bye," said I, "I'm sorry I've troubled you." I put out my hand, it came in contact with something cold and clammy. It was the chill of death. "It must indeed be a corpse," thought I. I withdrew therefore somewhat hastily and made my way to the first old man at the entrance.

"I've seen three," said I; "but one is dead in the shed."

"That is ould Michael, the pig," said the old man, "he'll be sint to market to-day," and it was at this that "Father" Brady was laughing. We,

in fact, all laughed, and I was their temporary butt. Number one accepted some tobacco from me, and told me that his father was very "ould," and that his grandfather was "oulder shtill," as for Michael, it would not do to say how "ould" he was, as it might affect his market value.

We trundled along the road, "Father" Brady still hilarious.

"I niver heard the loike," said he, "mishtaking a pig for an ould man." Then he became reminiscent. "I was at Bagnel's town once, shtaying at the hotel, and in a waak moment I tould the landlord that me ould mother came from that same place, and that her name was Murphy. Will, just as I was taking a rist there comes a knocking at the door. 'Come in,' ses I, and in walks a rid-nosed man, who said he was a Murphy. He shook hands and said, 'It's very dhry weather,' but before I could answer him there comes another knock at the door. 'Come in,' ses I, and in walks a young woman drissed in black. 'I'm widow Murphy,' ses she, putting her handkerchief to her eyes. 'Sit down,' ses I, as another thump came on the door. 'Come in,' I shouts, and in walks a butcher in his whoite overalls and a sheath knoife and shteel at his bilt. 'I'm butcher Murphy,' ses he. 'I hear that ye——' 'Sit down,' ses I. Then comes another kick at the door. 'Come in,' ses I. A man roulled in, he was dhrunk. 'I'm a Murphy,' ses he. 'Sit down,' ses I as the door rattled agin. 'Come in,' and in walks the schoolmaster. 'I'm schoolmaster Murphy,' ses he, 'I've lived here all my——' 'Sit down,' ses I, as the

door shook agin. 'Come in,' I yelled. He was an elderly man. 'I'm the town carpenter and undertaker,' ses he. 'My name is Murphy.' 'Sit down,' ses I, as a double knock came at the door. 'Come in,' I shouts agin. It was a middle-aged woman, and she came in with sivin childer, their faces all just scrubbed. 'We're all Murphies,' ses she, smiling at me. 'Sit down,' ses I, getting a bit dispirate. Agin the door rattled, and in walks two young women. 'Oh,' ses they, 'we're a bit late, but our name is Murphy, and——' 'Sit down,' ses I, 'there'll be enough for a taa-party soon.' Thinn the door handle was turned agin and a head came in. It was the 'goirrige' (fool) of the town. 'I'm a Murphy,' ses he, grinning like a baboon, 'and all me brothers and sisters are Murphies; shall I bring thim in? There's thirteen of thim.' 'No,' ses I, 'that's an unlucky number, kaap thim at home.' Thinn there was more thramping up the stairs and thinn an altercation at the door. 'Go in the room,' shouts the landlord, 'no foighting allowed on the shtairs.' They opened the door and came in, all sorts and all sizes. 'We're all Murphies,' shouted an old woman wid a cracked voice. Thinn ivery one in the room comminced talking, advancing their claims to be raal Murphies. They were shtill coming in at the door, and there was a foight going on in the corner of the room. I looks through the window, there was a queue outside just as if they were going to a picture-drome, so I squeezes me way out wid great difficulty and makes for the railway station and got away safe. It's terrible inconvaanient,"

said "Father" Brady, "to have too many relations."

We now got out to walk for exercise. The road was flat and rutty, with a dreary bog waste at each side. Splendid-looking men were cutting, wheeling, and stacking turf. They said they were earning ten shillings a week with a "cabin and a wee shpot o' land for potatoes." I thought it a great pity that such fine-looking men should be employed in this way, when they could have been utilised to much better advantage elsewhere. I suggested this to "Father" Brady. "Yes," he admitted, "it is, but they don't shtay long at it, they git off to America at the very first chance; just wait for some friend to send them their passage money, and thinn they're off. Of course, the praasts don't loike it, ye see they don't loike to lose their flock or collections, for if they go, their occupation is gone."

The road and country around was dreary and desolate-looking in the extreme; it was bog, black, dreary-looking bog, which seemed to reflect its melancholy shadows on the dark heavy clouds above. When we at length came to a cabin, and I suggested a halt for our midday meal, "Father" Brady shook his head.

"No," said he, "we must go farther on, for, ye see, if they saw me in this garb they'd want to give me their all, which they couldn't afford to do, so I'll laave thim me blissing instead, and we will faast a moile or two on." This we did on the bare road, and not at all to the liking of Drummer, who gave me a reproachful look, and said as plainly as possible, "Master, what have

you brought me to this benighted spot for, where there is no grass or hedge-tops to nibble at ?"

"Well, Drummer," said I, "we will make amends further on; in the meantime I will give you an extra supply of corn and hay;" and as I patted his neck and rubbed his nose he looked as if he knew all would be well. Con, too, seemed depressed at the prospect before him, his tail dropped a trifle, and he likewise entered a protest. "Master," said he, "you know my love for the hedgerows where I can go in and out and chase the birds; for the green fields where I can scamper after the sheep, and yet you have brought me to this spot of desolation." He, too, I pacified, promising him much fun in the future, and in the present a good repast.

After dinner we hurried along, covering many miles of road of the same gloomy, mournful, and depressing nature. When at last we came to a few scattered cabins we saw a group of excited women, old men, and a youth looking through the open window of an outbuilding. After many curtsies and lifting of "caubeens" to "Father" Brady, we were informed that the flat-bottomed cart which stood outside, and which was intended to take creature comforts to the bogmen and bring back a supply of turf for the cabins, was now rendered useless by the fact that the stalwart mule which usually dragged it, "was in his tantrums," and running wild in the outbuilding, and when its driver or any one else approached it, it ran at them with open mouth, or turned round and lashed out with its hind hoofs. We looked through the window. It was a vicious-looking

beast, with a dark-brown, shaggy coat, a pugnacious head and tail, ears that lay well back, white gleaming teeth, and red and yellow eyes, which at present seemed to scorn and defy the whole human race. "Father" Brady tried the "Saints" on him, while I went to the van and secured a handful of hay. I went to the door, opened it slightly and looked in, but when "Barney," which was the mule's name, saw me he ran at me, turned as if on a pivot, and lashed out his hind hoofs, making heavy indents on the old door. I went to the open window and held out the hay to him. He looked at it suspiciously, sniffed, then made a grab at it. I allowed him a taste, and then went to the door again, convinced that kindness, and hay in particular, were the only methods to subjugate him. He certainly seemed more peacefully inclined, and, gathering courage, I walked through the door with the hay in front of me. I had no sooner done so than he again turned and lashed out his hoofs. I retreated nimbly enough. The women, alarmed for their safety, pulled the door to, and left me alone with the most formidable antagonist I had ever faced. I looked at the mule, and again tried to cajole him with offers of hay, but he ran at me, uttering a strange, piercing neigh, his ears back, his eyes flashing, his open jaws gleaming.

"Come out of that," shouted "Father" Brady. "He'll kill yiz." Wild Irish cries from the women supplemented his words. Unfortunately the mule had got between me and the door. There was no time for argument, so I dealt him one on the nose and gave him a heavy undercut as well. This

stopped him for a moment, but did not cool his rage, for he came at me with pawing forelegs in the air, the hoofs noisily clashing against each other. This was so unexpected, that before I could get out of the way I had received a nasty blow on the sternum chest-bone. This so irritated me that, without further ado, I rushed at my adversary, dealing him heavy blows all over his face, and under the jaw in particular, but the only effect of this was to further enrage him, and, worse luck! to make my knuckles painfully sore. He came on blindly again, with grinning teeth and a wicked look in his eyes. "Father" Brady continued to pour in his maledictions, the women wailing a chorus. I saw at a glance that I had no chance with a creature that was impervious to punishment, and shouted to them to open the door; then another flash of thought came to me, and, after giving him another undercut, I closed with him, seizing him by the nose and trying to stop the air passages. His strength was so great that he swayed me from side to side, and even lifted me a trifle from the ground, but I hung on, and he appeared more passive. The door was flung open, and with one arm around his neck and my hands still firmly grasping his nostrils, I led Master Mule to the doorway. We came out, and assisted by his driver, backed him into his shafts, harnessed and bridled him, after which I gradually released my hold on his air passages, and amidst a noisy storm of Irish whoops he was once more installed in the yoke of serfdom. The women praised me, the old men nodded their approval, and "Father" Brady blessed me.

The youth and the mule drove away, so did we, and as all eyes were turned in adoration on "Father" Brady, I felt convinced that all believed it was owing to his saintly presence and influence that the "baast" was tamed.

CHAPTER XXVIII

SHADOWED

It was getting dark before we cleared the tract of bogland which had proved so depressing to all of us. We had passed through a small country town and were in touch again with the railway. I suggested a halt, but "Father" Brady, for some reason of his own, would not hear of it; we continued, therefore, on the main road for a couple of miles, and then, finding a suitable grass plot, climbed on to it. While I looked after Drummer, my companion cooked our supper—rashers and eggs with tea and toast—and to this we did full justice. As we had passed through the little town I had noted that the caravan attracted unusual interest, and I felt that it would have received some mischievous attention had it not been for the presence of "Father" Brady. He seemed anxious to get through the place quickly, and when he saw a group of men ahead of us he retired into the back of the compartment. I was challenged by these men. What was my name and where had I come from? they demanded. My companion at once, came from his retirement and in severe tones asked by what right they were stopping a gintleman who had come out to see the glories of Ould Ireland,

and who was a great friend of the Archbishop's. They apologised, raised their hats, and we passed on.

Now, after supper, as I went out to take a parting look at Drummer, I saw four of these men in earnest conversation, and as they pointed and nodded occasionally at the van, I presumed that was the theme of their discussion. I went indoors and reported the circumstance to my companion.

"They are only doing their duty," said he. "They have been tould to look out for Harvey Sullivan and have only found 'Father' Brady, that's the thruth of it; they are afraid I have turned 'informer' and want to catch hould of me. 'Informer' indaad," said he, with rising wrath, "as if I'd lind meself to such a dhirty trick! Take no notice of them. I'll manage it all roight, niver fear."

We passed the rest of the evening comfortably enough before the stove fire, and gossiping like a pair of old women. "Father" Brady had made himself a glass of punch, and, with his pipe, looked the picture of content. We had heard retreating footsteps, and rightly conjectured that the men had returned to the town, and this fact relieved the situation, for I could not help feeling some anxiety regarding the safety of Drummer. Everything, however, passed off well, and we were just about retiring for the night when Con gave one of his alarms. This was followed by faint echoes of tramping feet which gradually approached nearer and nearer. I suggested putting out the light, thinking we might escape observation, as

the tramping appeared to be going to, and not coming from, the town.

"Not at all," said my companion, "they've probably seen the loight already; we must face it. I'll manage it all roight."

We sat quietly until the men on march came opposite to us. They halted and in a moment or two there were violent knocks on the door, which I thought would burst it open.

"Give me the lamp," said "Father" Brady, "I will go." And while I endeavoured to pacify the dog he took the lamp, and opening the door, looked out into the darkness. "Who is it?" he shouted in stentorian tones. "Who dares insult 'Father' Brady and the Church? Lit me know yer names, so that ye may incur the wrath and curse of the Church."

He held the lamp forward, letting its reflections fall on his face and clerical garb. There was instant silence, then a man, evidently the leader, came forward, and with head uncovered, as the rest of the heads instantly were, said in humble and abject tones—

"We ax yer pardon, yer Riverence, we had no idea that a gypsy van would have a holy praast insoide. Ye see, the bhoys have been dhrilling a bit and were going home quietly when, the Saints forgive us! we came to inspict this van; but we ax yer Riverence's pardon, and it's happy we'd be if ye gave us yer blissing and not yer curse." Whereupon "Father" Brady gave them his blessing, and the overjoyed "bhoys" resumed their march towards the town.

"They've got too much spirits in them," said

"Father" Brady, "that's what's the matther, and not content wid that but they take more spirits in their insoides."

"All's well that ends well," said I, "and I suppose we can now retire to rest." This we did, and nothing more happened to mar our sleep. Next morning, however, we harnessed up and placed three or four miles to our credit before we breakfasted.

I asked my companion his opinion of these night frolics.

"It's simply that they have too much spirits," he observed, "and unless ye git a picturedrome or something in ivery village in the counthry, ye'll have the men saaking ixcoitment ilsewhere, and they're very fond o' going about the roads and lanes in the dark. Sometoimes they foight, and sometoimes they're quiet enough. If they could only have some one to taach thim singing altogither, instid of the caterwauling they try on now it would be betther."

We were now on a much better road than that of the preceding day; to the evident satisfaction of Drummer there was plenty of pasturage, and Con once more exercised his privilege of rummaging in the hedgerows as we passed along. The cottages were better built and the peasantry looked more comfortable. "Father" Brady was, of course, the chief object of interest, receiving and dispensing blessings as we went along.

A mule harnessed to a cart reminded us of the episode of the day before.

"Ye must be powerfully shtrong," remarked my companion, "to manage that baast the

way ye did yisterday. I niver saw the loike of it."

"I thought I was strong," said I, "until one day I was undeceived."

"Undecaaved? Is it by a girrl ye were?"

"No," said I, "not by a girl, but by a baby." "Father" Brady looked mystified. "It happened this way," said I. "I was walking along Newcastle moor with two young sparks, friends of mine, when we overtook a woman carrying a child. There was another little toddler walking by her side, who was crying to be carried also, and she stooped and lifted him in her arms, carrying both a little way. It was evidently too much for her, so I took one from her and carried it. I did not feel it for the first half-mile, then I commenced to have pains, pains in my arms, pains in my shoulder, and pains in my neck and back. People began to stare at me, and my two friends from behind threw gibes and sneers.

"'He makes a nice father,' said one. 'A pity he's got two children the same size,' said the other. 'They must be twins.'

"'How far is it now, missus?' said I, trying to look cheerful.

"'Not very far,' said she, and we tramped on. Then my baby began to cry.

"'Would you mind giving him this bottle?' said the woman, handing me one. I gave it to him, feeling very hot all over. I had never handled such a thing in all my life before, and, of course, the two sparks kept up their running fire of jeers.

"'They've taken to the bottle early in life,' said one. 'A bad example! a bad example!' said the other.

"'How far is it now, missus?' said I, trying again to speak cheerfully.

"'Not very far,' said she, in the same tone of voice as before.

"'He looks tired,' said one of the young sparks. 'Take a nip at the bottle,' advised the other. I felt inclined to drop the helpless child on the pavement, bottle and all, but the jeering young sparks made me feel cussed. My pains, however, were increasing, and I felt that to the seven labours of Hercules there ought to have been added an eighth, that of carrying a baby and bottle by an inexperienced man. My feet were getting unsteady, the jeers of my companions were increasing, the mother looked cheerful, and the baby was choking itself with the bottle—still the haven did not appear in sight. We were now entering the town, and the groups of people we passed were evidently amused at the procession. Small boys derided us and some road-menders, who ought to have been working, stopped to stare and express their opinion about us. I commenced to have neuralgia in the back and toothache in my neck, and was thinking seriously of collapsing on the pavement, when the woman stopped and took the baby from me.

"'Thank you very much, sir,' said she.

"'Don't mention it,' I gasped. 'He's a charming little fellow.'

"'Yes,' said she, 'you get so fond of them. I dare say, if you'd carried it much further, you

wouldn't have cared to give it up to me.' The sparks agreed with her, and we parted."

"Ah, they're quare things, are babies," commented "Father" Brady; "but if ye commince to look at it scientifically ye can see for yerself how nature has designed women to carry babies better than men. Ye see they've lumps here and ballast there to hould thim down and fix them safe; just loike a Dutch lugger carrying a lot of canvas. Ah, babies are a quare lot, but it's the women that are quarer."

"You mustn't judge all women by that fiancée of yours that you have left breaking her heart in Dublin."

"Father" Brady placed a hand against his side and another on his stomach.

"Don't," said he pathetically; "the very thought of that villainous, satanic necromancer, makes me faal bad."

"Well, you should not judge, as I say, of the whole by the specimen."

"I could startle ye," said he, stopping short, with a tragic look on his face.

"I don't think so," said I pleasantly. "I have had too much experience of them."

"What would ye say," said "Father" Brady, looking hard at me, "if I was to tell ye that at the prisint momint me whole body, head and heart included, is in a ferment of passion for the swaatest girrl that iver trod this earth?" His face paled a little, his features worked nervously, and his eyes blazed with passion.

"I'm sorry, old man," said I. "I had no idea. I'm really glad to hear it, for it's a pity a

man doesn't taste a little real love in his lifetime, before he finishes his earthly career."

"A little raal love," he repeated. "Igh, it's more than that that I've felt; but I'll not say that I've ever had it, moind ye, that is, not returned. Do ye undershtand?"

"'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all,'"

I quoted.

"Do ye raally think so?" he said doubtfully. "Would it be better for a cripple to love exercise and niver get it, to be fond of money and niver have it, to love whisky and niver dhrink it, and love a girrl without a return?"

"The cripple could get a little exercise, and it would be a poor man that couldn't earn money or get whisky, if he wanted it. As for a girl's love, if you can't get that from one, you can get it from another."

"Well, we'll have dinner here," said "Father" Brady, with a big sigh, "and maybe afther I'll tell ye all about it."

CHAPTER XXIX

"FATHER" BRADY'S LOVE-STORY

After dinner "Father" Brady, who appeared to be in a quiet and silent mood, said he would walk a little, and getting out of the van, dropped to the rear while I drove forward. There was, as usual, a great deal of animal life on the road, cows, horses, jennets, and pigs, the last-named being a positive nuisance, as they often slept in the middle of the road and objected to being disturbed in their after-dinner siesta. The hedgerows were rich and bright with colour, with plenty of grass pasturage at each side of the road; occasional farms, with their backs to the roadway, and solitary cottages on the wayside were passed. At one of these latter I slowed down in order not to get too far ahead of "Father" Brady; as I did so a man, rather respectably attired, stopped at a cottage on our right. He knocked at the door, and the man who answered it surlily asked his business.

"I've come for the rent," said the man. The tenant retreated and reappeared in a moment with a carving knife in his hand, this he proceeded to sharpen with a swish, swish, on the doorstep.

"Is it rint yiz want?" said he, lifting his eyes darkly to the collector. The latter hesitated.

"I'll give ye rint in a minute," continued the man malevolently, and with a swish, swish, he continued to sharpen his knife; then he rose to his feet, but the collector had hastened away. When I came up to him I said—

"Your job does not appear to be a very happy one."

"No," said he, "it is not. If I had only known what I have to put up with I would never have left Manchester."

"Is it poverty," I asked, "or cussedness?"

"A little of each," said he, "but the rent is only one shilling a week, they can easily afford to pay that."

"One would think so," I remarked.

"They're up to all sorts of tricks," said he. "The other day, when I called for the rent at a cottage about a mile from here, I was told the man was dead. I went inside to make certain; there he was sure enough in his coffin. Several people were in the room, some were placing candles around the coffin and others were crying. I was invited to attend the 'wake' in the evening, but, after expressing my sympathy, I left. Well, two or three days after that I came on the 'dead man' working in his potato patch. When I challenged him, and again demanded the rent, he said he could not afford it on account of the expenses over the supposed 'wake.' I believe," the collector added, "that this coffin is hired out for similar duty all over the county." He stopped at a bypath.

"You have an awful job," said I. "If I were you I would throw it up."

"It's a job," he replied, "that should only be undertaken by criminals with the alternative of being hanged." He went up the side-path to another cottage and we proceeded slowly on our way.

At the top of a slight rise I waited for my companion and told him of the rent incident.

"There should be no such thing as rint," said he, "iveryone should own their own cottage, and if they can't afford to buy it, they should pay fifty per cent. increase of rint until the property is their own." He mounted the van and took the reins while I and Con had a spell at walking. Con was continually getting into trouble by his barking at everybody and everything, and it took me all my time to keep him in order.

At length we remounted, as I wanted to give "Father" Brady an opportunity of relating his romance. I took the reins from him and handed him my "Where is it?" book.

"See what T—— says about pigs," said I. He fumbled over the pages.

"Here it is," he said, "'Pigs—Ireland's greatest asset.' This is a good book," said he, continuing to fumble over the pages.

"What does it say about women?" I asked, thinking this might be a reminder to him.

"Here it is," he said, "'Women—Feeling creatures.'"

"So they are," said I.

"But," said "Father" Brady, "he shpells 'feeling'—F-e-l-i-n-e."

"He's a wicked man," said I.

"Father" Brady did not tell me his love-story

until after supper that night when we were both comfortably ensconced in our easy-chairs before the stove, he as usual, with his punch and pipe beside him.

"I'm going to tell ye," he commenced, "about that little love affair of moine; ye may be surproised at an 'omadhaun' loike me feeling the 'tender passion,' but ye see human nature is the same all the wurrld over no matther how high or low we are, that's a matther of degree. Now when I was a young gossoon I had me draams of love, loike any other fool. It's a quare thing, this desoire insoide ye to worship or adore something. Of course, men are different, some worship music, billiards, racing, gambling, wealth, sport, books, eating and dhrinking, but some are always on the look-out for a fellow-soul to talk with, to be friendly with, to be faithful and loyal to, throughout the coming years of a loifetoime; that's what I was on the look-out for, and one day I met it. I was going up Sackville Street and met a young girl face to face. She wasn't wonderfully pretty; she had a good face with a healthy colour on it, but it was her large, sad, grey eyes that took possession of me; they were so appealing; they went shtraight to the heart, asking for sympathy, compassion, friendship, and protection—a boat in a raging sea; a star in a thunderstorm; a young girrl in a merciless wurrld. Well, a sensation wint roight through me, and I tould me eyes to say 'I'm your man, I'll worship, adore, and protect ye to the last day of me loife; but, of course, she had no toime to undershtand these things, but she saw me, our eyes had met, my commonplace,

and her broight heavenly stars. Well, afther that I worshipped nothing but her, thinking by day and draaming by noight, but, although I wore the shoe leather off me faat in walking up and down Sackville Street day afther day, I niver met her, but her image was always before me. It made me industrious so that I moight have money; it made me shtudy so that I moight have larning, for moind ye, I can say 'sweet' and not 'swaat,' and 'meat,' and not 'maat,' as well as yerself can—English fashion, ye know, if I try. I generally do when I am in England, but when I come back to the ould counthry I always go back to its accents and dialect, it's aasier to undershtand. Well one evening, just to broighten up me spirits, I wint into the circus in the Rotunda Gardens. I paid me sixpence and sat at the front row of the gallery, where I could have a good look at iverything.

"Iverything was cliver, and I was moightily plaased, thinn the bell rang, a beautiful horse bounded in the ring with a koind of flat pad on its back covered with fringe and spangles. The music then gave a chord and into the ring, dressed in silks and muslins, came my wonderful girrl. I tell ye me heart made such a thumping, that the man nixt to me looked annoyed at the noise it was making. She was lifted on horseback and away the horse wint galloping around the ring. My girrl danced, jumped through garlands and over streamers, and thinn took a rist whoile the jister wint on talking nonsense. She looked around, I troied to attract her notice, but she did not see me, and there was I faasting upon her, for to me now she was lovelier and more beautiful than any other

living craature I have iver seen. Well, I continued to stare at her until I got black in the face, and thinn she wint out and came back to great clapping of hands and thinn she wint out agin. I looked at the programme, her name was Signora Ernestina. I looked at her name on the programme for the rist of the performance, and when the band played 'Patrick's Day' I wint out from the sacred ground and wint home to dream about her, and whin I looked in the glass and saw what an ugly plain face me father and mother had given me, and thought of her lovely flower of a face I got discontented and downhearted, but ivery day afther that I sent her by post a flower of some sort or other, or maybe a box of chocolates if I could afford it, and I wint to the circus ivery noight and sat in the ould saat, and me heart thumped ivery noight to the annoyance of the rist of the audience. Yes, ivery noight I faasted me eyes on my idol, but niver a glance did she give me. Thinn, one noight when she and her horse was galloping around the ring, a blackguard of a fellow next to me flourished his evening paper. The horse darted away from it, and Signora, the most beautiful of beautifuls in the whole universe, fell headlong into me arms. For a moment I held her, only wishing that I had the wings of that blackguard 'Mercury,' so that I could fly away with her. I pressed her to me for a millionth part of a second. There was a hubbub. I set her on her faat. "Thank you," she said swaatly, and her eyes met moine at last. I wint home in what ye call a delirium, draaming and draaming and draaming about her, but whin

I wint to the circus on the following noight she didn't appear, and me heart was broke. So I collars hould of a programme boy and gave him sixpence to tell me what had become of her. 'She's shaken and bruised,' ses he, 'but it won't matther much, as this was her last week, and next week she and her ould mother are going to thravel with a circus in England.'

"I felt loike lead all over and could scarcely move, and wint home faaling loike a lead coffin. Then I tried to think. 'I'll follow her all over the wurrld,' ses I, 'until she marries or dies, which is the same thing,' and thinn I comminced to count up me savings. Just six pounds, that's all I had, but I got the address of the circus in England, and I wint over and ingaged meself as a common tent-man at one pound a week just for the sake of being near to her, to look at her, and to be her protector; whin she looked at me she didn't know me, but I felt happy all the same in being so near to her. One day, afther the mid-day performance was over, I heard a scream in the little drissing tint. I knew it was her, so I rushed there and found a blackguard of a German animal-trainer with his arms about her trying to kiss her. I attacked him, and I hope the blackguard remembered ould Ireland afther I'd finished with him. I saw her safely to her lodgings. She thanked me with her eyes, and afther a bit she ses, 'You are the tent-man, aren't you, that is always so kind to me?'

"'Thank you my, lady,' ses I, 'I am always at your service'—I always tried to spake proper when I spoke to her. 'Just say the word, me lady,

and I will kill the brute for you.' 'Oh no!' ses she, shaking her head, 'you have hurt him a great deal as it is. I hope you haven't killed him.' Well, afther that she noticed me more, but I could see that she did not exactly traat me as an equal, so a great resolve came upon me, and one day I met her in the village where the circus was shtopping, and I tould her that I was in love with a young lady who was too good for me, and that I was going away to improve meself and make a fortune, so that I moight be more suitable for her. She didn't guess it was for her sake I was going, but she looked very sorry, and said she hoped I would succeed, and that she would miss me very much. The nixt morning I was off, and did not see her for some years, but I niver forgot her and niver will."

CHAPTER XXX

A GLEAM OF SUNSHINE

"FATHER" BRADY took a sip at his punch, puffed irritably at his pipe, then taking it out, heaved a great sigh.

"Whin I went away," he continued, "I became a baggage man to a shtrong man and larned his work, and what I lacked in stringth I made up by using me brains. Thinn I joined a clairvoyant and larned that too. Thinn I thravelled as a ventriloquist with a dummy doll on me knee. Thinn I became a professional philanthropist for the disthressed Irish ladies. I hadn't forgotten me young misthress all this toime, for I thravelled great distances just to have a look at her lovely swaat face. Thinn, afther I'd saved up some money, I thought I would go and spaak to her. I found out that she was wurrking at Hengler's Cirque, London, so I wint there and faasted me eyes upon her once more. She was lovelier than iver, and as usual me heart comminced to thump whin I saw her. This toime I sat in the boxes, and I am sure looked an iligant gint in me foine clothes, but she did not notice me; but I waited one morning near the back intrance until the rehearsal was over, and when I saw her coming I raised me hat, and handed

her me card. 'Oh,' she said, 'you are Herr Sullivanski, the strong man; I've often heard of you. Do you wish me to do anything for you at the circus?' 'No,' said I, 'but, perhaps, my lady, you will remember the tent-man that punished that German blackguard for insulting you, and afterwards bade good-bye to you?' 'Oh yes,' said she, 'I remember quite well,' and she coloured just a trifle. Thinn I lost me voice, and stood just loike a jackass without a word to say for meself, but me eyes came to the riscue and entered into a pourparley with hers. 'Have pity on my master,' ses mine, 'he's a dull, stupid jackass, but he's terribly in love with your mistress;' and her eyes, God bless them! seemed to undershtand. 'I remember,' she said, 'that you left us to try and get on in the world; you seem to have succeeded.' 'Pretty well,' said I, 'and my prospects are good.' 'And how did you get on with the young lady?' Thinn I got red in the face. 'I have not met her until now,' I jerked out at last; thinn she coloured and twisted her sweet mouth and drooped her eyes, and thinn said nothing, and neither of us shpoke a word. 'I hope your mother is well,' said I at last. 'May I see you home to your lodgings?' She turned without a word, and I walked silently by her soide. 'I hope you will forgive me for my impertinence,' said I, 'but no man can help loving when his time comes. My time came long ago, when I met you in Sackville Street, and when you fell off the horse into my arms at the circus, and when I followed you to England just to be near you.' That was my plea. 'Won't you think the matter over? I'll not trouble

you any more now, but I'll come again.' 'This is our lodgings,' she said, stopping at a door in Great Marlborough Street. 'Thank you very much for seeing me home.' She shook hands with me. Her eyes were drooped so that moine could not see thim, and then she vanished through a doorway that had been left ajar. I stood staring at the door for a moment, thinn walked away, once more in a delirium, calling meself hard names and thinn thrying to think what next I should do. Well, that evening whoile me young misthress was attending the performance I called on her ould mother at the lodgings and stated me case. She comminced to cry, and said that her daughter was her only means of support, and if I, or any one else, iver took her away she would have to end her days in the workhouse; moreover, she had a valuable ingagement at prisint which would not finish for another two years, and she pleaded hard that I would not interfere with her daughter's welfare until that toime was over, and I promised. I did not go near her agin for a long toime, but I saw her repeatedly at the circus and sint her many prisints. Thinn, whin the two years were up I sought her agin. They were once more in Dublin. I found out where her lodgings were. They were in Talbot Street, at the house where ye called. They were professional lodgings, and I had stayed there many toimes meself; comfortable enough they were whoile ould Flint was aloive, but whin his woife became a widow she was an impudent hussy and flirted with iviry professional that came to her house. She had one son, a ne'er-do-well. Well, whin I called and

asked to see the idol of me heart, she said, 'You've come too late; she was married last week to my son, and they're away at Howth on their honeymoon,' and thinn she tried to make up to me; but I was so disgusted, so broken-hearted, that I took the first boat back to England, and iver since that toime I've baan going down the hill. That was many years ago. Now listen to this, friend of moine, whin I got reckless and joined the bhoys a week or two ago, who should I maat but young Flint. I asked him where his woife was, he said he had no woife. I asked him if he knew what had become of Signora Ernestina; he replied that her mother was dead and that the signora was now lame afther an accident, and was filling, at the prisint toime, as far as he knew, a subordinate position in a thravelling theatrical company at prisint in the west of Ireland. She will now," said Father Brady, "be middle-aged, but she will niver be middle-aged to me; she will be always young, always charming, always beautiful, and always me swaat misthress, and I'm going once more to foind her out and offer her all that is lift of me."

He had scarcely finished before the dog gave his usual warning growl of some one approaching.

"There is some one on the road besides ourselves," I remarked, as Con continued to whimper and growl.

"Probably another set of dhrunken blackguards or 'moonlighters,' or 'big-heads' without any sinse in thim."

The dog gave a series of intermittent short barks, and then we heard the tramping of men on

the road. "They'll see us roight enough; that blackguard of a moon has just paaped out from behoind the clouds, bad luck to it!" The men on the march stopped, there was a whispered colloquy, then leaving the road they marched on to the grass plot and surrounded the van. They evidently carried sticks, for they kept up a tattoo on and all around the caravan. This set Con in a fury, and now I heard many curses as the marauders sprawled over Drummer, who had lain down between the van and hedgerow. Drummer, indeed, was my principal anxiety, for the countryside was full of stories of cattle driving and cruelty to horses. "Father" Brady, however, had the matter well in hand, for taking up the lamp he, in answer to incessant knockings, opened the door, and holding the lamp above and in front of his head addressed the crowd in scornful and vehement language.

"What do ye maan, ye blackguards, by annoying a gintleman who is a friend of the Archbishop's, and a praast of the Holy Church who is taking him about to show him the beauties of the counthry?" The crowd was abashed and silent.

"We ax yer pardon, yer Riverence, and the gintleman's too," said the leader of the gang; "but we're just having a bit of a march, and thought we had tumbled on a gypsy van where maybe we moight git a dhrop o' whisky for the bhoys."

"Whisky, indaad, is it? Cock ye up with whisky! It's the curse of the Church ye'll be getting for gallivanting about whin ye ought to be aslaap in yer cradles, ye miserable set of gatachans!"

"We ax yer pardon, yer Riverence; we'll go away immaadiately."

"Hush!" said "Father" Brady, "what is that spirit I see over yer heads? Holy St. Patrick! it's the saint himself." The crowd looked up; there was nothing to be seen in the gloom, but a voice unmistakably came from it. "My curse be on all min who disturb the friends of the Church." There was an awful silence.

"Did yiz hear that?" whispered "Father" Brady in suppressed tones. "Git off as quick as ye can to yer homes, or ye'll all be turned into vipers and shnakes." The men needed no second bidding, there was an instant stampede, and the sound of their hurrying feet was soon lost in the distance. "Father" Brady closed the door, hooked the lamp on to its chain, and then threw himself into his armchair. "They'll go back now," said he, "the omadhauns! to their homes, and say how they heard the voice of St. Patrick in the darkness over their heads."

"The saint has a good Irish accent," said I, "and very like your own, but you did it very well; I never heard the voice thrown better."

"It's a foine bit of sport I had with that ould bladder of lard, Misthress Flint, the last toime I was there. The ould bundle of clothes was making up to me, d'ye see. Ses she, 'You're down on yer luck, Misther Sullivanski, and it's a home I'm offering to ye, with a practical and sinsible woman to manage it for ye. Ye'll have no more heavy weights to throw about, and other nonsinse, but just yer armchair and a dhrop o' whisky and a poipe; it's the loife of a gintleman ye'd be having.'

Thinn I threw me voice, just loike old Flint's, at the back of her head.

"'Shame on ye, Eustachia,' ses old Flint. Mrs. F. turned pale and screwed her head round.

"'Did ye hear anything?' ses she in a whisper.

"'I thought I heard the voice of an angel,' ses I, 'but it must have baan the echo of yer own voice, Misthress Flint.'

"'Maybe so,' ses she. 'Well, what I was sayin', Misther Sullivanski, was this. I'm a lonely woman, I've only one boy, who's married to that circus rider, and she'll kaap him off me hands.' Then the voice of old Flint comminced to spaak at the back of her head once more. 'Eustachia,' it said, 'be kind to our boy.' Agin Mrs. F. turned blue in the face. 'Is there anything at the back of me?' she ses in a whisper. 'I'm not sure,' ses I, 'but ye were saying that ye were a lonely woman, Misthress Flint.'

"'So I was, but it's full of nerves I am this evening, that's why I want a protector. It's a big house is this same to live in alone, and whin it's full of lodgers they want looking afther.'

"'Ye promised to love, honour, and obey me,' said the voice of old Flint from behind the piano, 'ye niver did it, ye——' But Mrs. F. did not wait for any more of her husband's upbraidings, but gives a scraam and flung herself on top of me for protection. The ould chair could not bear the ixtra weight, and away we all three tumbles on to the flure. There was a hurrying of faat up the shtairs, and the ground-floor lodgers came in to know what was the matther."

"Good-night, Sullivanski," said I; "I wish I

had that ventriloquial gift of yours. I think I could use it to advantage sometimes."

"Bong swore," he muttered.

Con was already in deep slumber, and I soon had followed his example.

CHAPTER XXXI

"CEAD MILLE FAILTHE"

I WAS awakened by the savoury smell of breakfast being prepared.

"Am I late?" I shouted to "Father" Brady.

"Plinty of toime," he called back, "breakfast will not be ready for a couple of minutes yit."

I jumped up, washed, dressed and went into the open air, breathing and shaking myself in exercise. Con frisked and jumped about also as we paid a visit to Drummer, who, gravely cropping the hedge, took no notice of our excitement, but then, he was not aware that this was our last day of cross-country, and that in a few hours we would see the broad waters of the Atlantic.

"Breakfast," roared "Father" Brady, and inside Con and I went. "What are yiz all excoited about?" said he, with a flash of happy excitement in his own blue eyes.

"Entirely on your own account, old friend. Con and I are curious to see your angel, and to see also the consummation of your devotion to her."

"I'm not saying that I'm not a bit anxious misilf, for women are quare creatures, and much may happen in a year or a month, or a day for the matther of that."

"But your signora is not a woman, she is an angel."

"Thrue for ye, and that's me only hope. We ought to be there be dinner toime, and afther we pass through the nixt village I'll change me driss a bit, for ye see praasts are not allowed to make love, though I'm thinking that's agin nature."

We dispatched breakfast quickly, and while I attended to Drummer, "Father" Brady washed up the crockery. In a few minutes more we were on the road. There were splashes of colour on the hedgerows, a little tattered and tawdry as marking the passing of summer. Splashes of colour, too, in the air as many a painted butterfly tossed and gyrated in their outings; and splashes of colour, also, in the high heavens as roseate clusters of woolly cloud sailed across an azure sky. Our minstrel, the robin, sang us a merry lay, and with our senses keen with anticipation everything was full of hope as we sped along. We passed through a large village, "Father" Brady keeping in retirement while we did so, receiving little notice beyond a few nods and shakes of the head. When "Father" Brady reappeared he had discarded the clerical collar and had adopted one of Shakespearean design with a vest of modern cut.

"Hello!" said I, "who are you supposed to be now? What is your name, rank, and profession?"

"Phelim O'Callaghan, lay missionary from the South Sea Islands, and glad I am to be rid of that saintly costume; it goes agin the grain to play the hypocrite, but it was either that or murther."

"Phelim," said I, "I can smell the ozone, and

so can Drummer. Look at him pricking up his ears and curving his nostrils; it reminds him of his old home on the East Coast."

"Bedad! I think yer roight. Why, see! look ahead there. Glory be to God! if it isn't the wild saa." It was, sure enough. We mounted a rise, there, as far as the eye could see, were the broad, strong waters of the Atlantic rolling in titanic phalanxes on the serried cliffs below, casting their mighty power on grim rocks which caught and shattered their strength time after time.

We turned northwards, the wild ocean on our left and green hills on our right. In a little time, for so it seemed, we came upon an old feudal-looking town with strangely carved deserted stone houses in it, relics of a former Spanish occupation.

"Which is the way to the thravelling theatre?" shouted Phelim to a passer-by. We were directed. "Showmen," was whispered from group to group as we passed along the street. At the farther end of the town we came to it at last, in a field adjoining an hotel, a strange medley of caravans, boards, and canvas. I stood still with astonishment, not at the theatre, but at the name it bore, "Lawrence's Theatre." Lawrence, my old gipsy friend, who had befriended me on the road when I was but a boy, and had proved a tried friend since. There, coming down the steps of his caravan, was the tall, elderly, white-haired figure, now walking across the grass to the gate to see who the new arrivals in a van, so far from civilization, could possibly be. His eye beamed with pleasure when hec aught sight of Phelim O'Callaghan, and—may I say it?—it kindled with delight and astonishment

when he caught sight of me. He ran to me, holding out his two hands, then, passing an arm around me, drew me into the field.

"Welcome," said he. "A thousand welcomes, or, as the 'Gorgio' here say, 'cead mille failthe.'" Then came Madam Lawrence lumbering down the steps, more matronly, but pleasant and smiling as of yore; fair-headed women and black-headed, swarthy men, once youngsters in the Lawrence family, all smiling a welcome. Then, attracted by the noise, strange figures appeared from the stage door. A light, ethereal-looking man wearing pince-nez; two or three gaunt figures with "melancholy" written on their faces, a heavy tragic-looking person treading the sward with long impressive strides, all bowing, raising their hats and shaking hands on introduction. Ladies too came, ladies with fading beauty, with lines of care and anxiety on their faces, all coming to greet one whom they had known in former days. A solitary, pensive figure, supporting herself with crutch and stick, stayed hesitatingly behind; a sad pale face, brown hair touched with grey, a sweet, quivering mouth, and large pathetic grey eyes. I saw Sullivanski hurry up to her and guessed who she was. The introductions were surprising. The Ponsonbys, Cholmondeleys, and Beaumonts of former days were now O'Briens, O'Donnells, and Macdermotts, the heavy man alone retaining his sobriquet of Mr. Brabazon Tudor, which name long usage had convinced him was his by lineal right.

The company now returned to their rehearsal, and with Mr. Lawrence as my guide I wheeled

the caravan into line with his own, then took away Drummer to a well-earned stall at the hotel stables.

Sullivanski joined me in the stable-yard. He looked out of humour, and was using language unfit for public print. I thought he had had a disappointment over his signora. I questioned him sympathetically.

"Not at all," he said; "I was just passing the hotel when I saw on the ground—it's English I'm spaaking now—well, I saw on the ground a fluttering banknote for a hundred pounds. I saw the figure plainly enough. I pounced on it, scraping me knees, but held tight to the financial emblem of England's greatness, and of mine, too. 'It will start me in housekeepin',' ses I to myself, 'and when I got into this blessed yard I took another peep at it, thinking it might be a five hundred or maybe one thousand pounds—it was neither, it was an advertisement for a teashop. Let us go round and break the blackguard's head."

"How did you get on with your signora?" said I.

"Shake hands," said he.

"You weren't long over it," said I, shaking him heartily by the hand.

"Oh, I've said nothing to her about that yet, that would be what you call premature, but I've sounded her. She has no friends except the Lawrences, she's a lonely, pathetic woman, but I mean to devote my existence to her if she will only have me. But more of that anon, as the play-actors say. Now let us go and buy some things

in. We want eggs, bacon, butter, bread—that will be sufficient for to-day, for Mr. Lawrence says we are to sup with him to-night after the performance."

We went into a grocer's shop. He looked at a basket of eggs on the counter rather dubiously.

"I want a dozen eggs," he said. "I—er—want them for an experiment; they mustn't be newly laid, the older the better for my purpose."

"All roight, sorr," said the man, "I'll pick thim out for ye." He went over the basket carefully, and at last placed twelve eggs on the counter. "I don't think these are what ye would call newly laid, in fact I know they're not, but the other ones have just come in from a farm."

"Ah, well!" said Sullivanski, "I don't think I'll go on with the experiment to-day. I'll just take a dozen of these farm eggs instead." The man grew red in the face, but nevertheless gave the eggs, and, as we increased our order, his natural good-humour returned, and he laughed at Sullivanski's adroit shopping methods.

There was a fair attendance at the theatre in the evening, the piece being "The Peep o' Day Boys," an extravagant drama full of exciting situations, and pandering very much to the sentiment and gullability of the Irish race. It was, of course, received with enthusiasm. Sullivanski and I sat on the front seat, where we were soon afterwards joined by Mr. Lawrence.

"I daren't put on any English plays at present, said he. "If I did they would tear the place down. In Rome we must do as Rome does; but we close to-morrow night, for we are going to Castle

Abbey. Young Lord ——, who is going to marry little V——, who used to be with us years ago, don't you remember her ? She was a pet of yours when you visited us."

"I remember her quite well," said I; "but how strange, for I saw her and her fiancé only a few weeks ago, and we had a bit of a gathering then with the Boswells."

"That is strange," said Mr. Lawrence, "well, they are here now. They have two or three houses in Ireland, and one is about five miles away. He has engaged our company to give an open-air performance, 'A Midsummer Night's Dream.' We daren't give it here, and as he wishes his house party to see it he has asked us to come up and give it in the open, in the old 'strolling players' style. We are all looking forward to it, and especially to seeing V——, whom good fortune has not changed one whit. They have, indeed, been to see us two or three times already. You will, of course, come with us; she will be glad to see the strong young man who used to toss her about."

"Yes, I will be very glad," I returned. "She had a very natural charming manner when I saw her a few weeks ago. She did not quite recognise me, but we were very good friends."

I noticed the orchestra was filled by members of the Lawrence family, and expressed my satisfaction at it.

"Yes," he rejoined, "it was a wise thing to bring them up to music. I could never have ventured this far from England without an orchestra I could rely on."

"You have one stranger playing," I remarked as I noticed the sad, pensive face of Sullivanski's signora.

"Yes, that is Mary Ainley; she was a circus rider once, but met with an accident and made her home with us. She plays the violin very well, and helps us with the wardrobe. She is a sweet kind of woman, very interesting to talk to, kind, gentle, and does not talk too much."

I turned and spoke to Sullivanski, but he was so intent, listening to his charmer, that I did not venture again to interrupt his day dreams.

CHAPTER XXXII

NATURE'S "SETTING"

WHAT a famous supper we had in Lawrence's caravan! The menu, fried fish, chips, with cold tart, beer, and coffee, was not exactly epicurean, but the conversation, though necessarily Bohemian, was of high-water mark. It dealt with the road, gypsies, strolling players, managers, magistrates, horses, dogs, and our separate experiences since we had last met; and Mrs. Lawrence declared that she had never met in the whole course of her experience any three women who had talked so much, on saying which, she sat down and joined in the gossip. Then came a tap at the door, and in answer to "Come in" a thin, spare, swarthy-looking gypsy entered. This was Albert Hearne, who had been roaming the country buying in coloured horses, skewbalds, piebalds and spots, for circus proprietors in England. He had evidently made Lawrence his banker, and it was strange to see that worthy go to his bedroom and hunt between the mattresses for the leather case which contained the notes. A new turn was given to the conversation on horses, Hearne reporting that there was a fair supply; that he was collecting them together, when he would himself take them over to England. They were all interested

with my meeting with the Boswells and later on Gypsy Lovell. Lawrence told us he was short of men for "A Midsummer Night's Dream," and asked Sullivanski if he would play his old part of Bottom, as he had done it before. Sullivanski shook his head.

"No," he said, "give it to your usual comedian. I don't care to appear with an ass's head upon my shoulders at present, it would be too lifelike, but I'll help you out with Quince or that blackguard of a father that wanted his daughter to marry the wrong man." Lawrence agreed, and said he would have to double some of the parts and omit some of the characters altogether, but this did not seem to trouble him very much. Mrs. Lawrence chaffed Sullivanski upon his attentions to Mary Ainley, and I remarked that it was strange that he objected to wearing an ass's head, and equally strange that he had dropped his Irish accent for good English. He took all this in good part, and asked Lawrence if he would give him a job.

"Yes," answered Lawrence, "I can give you 'Utility' at two shares, and extra if you specialize in anything.

"I've taken a notion to stay in the neighbourhood for a bit," said Sullivanski, with a glance at me. "I've got a great idea that I want to practise up. I'm thinking I could introduce the ventriloquism in a spirit séance to some purpose. What would ye say if I made yer dead mother-in-law give her blessing to ye out of the darkness?"

The idea was voted good, and Sullivanski promised to work it out in his fertile brain. He

had taken lodgings in the town, and I retired very late to my caravan.

I was up early looking after Drummer and bringing him into the field for pasture. Then the Lawrences insisted on my taking my meals with them, and it was very pleasant for me to once more take my place at a table that had been so hospitable to me years before. Then I went into the town to make some purchases, my laundry in particular having been neglected. In the main street I met Mary Ainley; she was trying to carry a parcel with some difficulty. She smiled at me. I stopped at once.

"I've heard of you before," said I pointedly, "and probably you will have heard of me from the same source." She acknowledged that it was so, and I noted with interest that her voice had a joyful note in it that belied her age and infirmities. I took the parcel from her and walked back with her to the field. I, of course, put in a good word for my late companion. She blushed prettily and agreed that he was very good, and kind, and clever.

"That is all any man can aspire to," said I. But her shyness overcame her, and she did not speak any further on that delicate subject, but I drew her out on other topics, and she was interested at my meeting with the Spinders on the road. She had a shy, reserved, and natural refinement that was very charming, and I told Sullivanski so when I saw him.

"Of course she is, the darlint," said he enthusiastically, and unconsciously breaking into his native accent. "I'll tell ye what it is, ould friend,

it's meself that will work loike a slave until I am able to make her independent of work."

"I would not do that altogether," I counselled. "Active women, like active men, should avoid the position of a 'do nothing'; but have you settled it with her yet?"

"Aasy, aasy, it's as good as settled. I've not had much opportunity, but ye know 'Irishmen vinture where angels, God bliss thim, fear to tread.' She said she did not wish to be a burden on any one, but whin I tould her the great favour she would be bestowing upon me she relaxed a bit, and niver fear, I'll manage it all roight in the end."

During the afternoon, conveyances arrived from Castle Abbey to take Mr. Lawrence's company and properties to the castle grounds, Con and I accompanying them as guests. It was a beautiful drive, the road separating bogs and moorland from the great Atlantic, so refreshing to our sight and so musical to our ears. It was a pleasure to see the enjoyment and content of the strollers as they lolled back in the luxuriant equipages which had been dispatched for them, and their awe and delight when they reached the scene marked out for their performance, a lawn, flanked on two sides with groves of trees, the front opening on to the great waters before them, and at the rear the castle, an ancient pile of buildings at one end of which were the ruins of an old abbey, their crumbling walls flanking and invading one end of the grove.

Mr. Lawrence and his leading man, with "Property" in attendance, at once arranged the

little scenery they had brought with them, and very effective it looked with all the natural surroundings of the place. While every one was busy doing something, Con and I gossiped with Mary Ainley and the heavy man, Mr. Brabazon Tudor, the latter of whom striding across the sward whispered to me in impressive tones that at last he felt himself in his proper environment. Mary Ainley, assisted by the property man's wife, was arranging the dresses in their proper order. Then I saw again that vision of beauty that I had once seen before on the moors with the Boswells. She was accompanied by her fiancé. They at once went up to Mr. Lawrence, the "princess" taking his arm in a familiar and affectionate manner, while he explained his plan of action to them; they then mingled with the players, making them feel quite at home, and in due course reached me. Their surprise was evident, and explanations had to be given.

"Won't you come and see my mother?" said Lord ——; and passing up some stone steps, we came on to the castle terrace, where a very charming old lady was seated, surrounded by many guests. I was introduced. A guest made room for me, and sitting by her I gave an outline of my journey, in which she appeared interested. Then a bell rang.

"That is for the players' tea," she said, and I excused myself, hoping I might be of some use to Lawrence.

Trestle tables had been quickly set and laid by numerous servants with a capital feast of dainties, fruit and tea, the ladies and gentlemen

of the house party taking the duty of impromptu waiters. This over the "waiters" returned to dress for dinner, while the company strolled around with great enjoyment.

At last, as the evening advanced, the bell rang for the company to assemble. Seats had been hastily arranged, not only for the house party, but for numerous visitors, the servants, farm hands, and fishermen from a little village a mile away, all of whom made up quite a large audience. The "princess" and her fiancé insisted on my sitting near them.

"Mr. Lawrence has told me who you are," said the former, giving me another warm shake of the hand. "I remember you quite well now; you used to toss me about, didn't you? What a tease I must have been!"

"You were just a fairy, nothing more," I replied. Then the play began. Never had a play such a setting. Never had a setting such a play. The strollers excelled themselves. Every quip and prank of Bottom being much appreciated, as was the music, choruses, and dances by the fairies.

"I believe I once played Peasblossom or Mustardseed, I don't know which," whispered the "princess" to me.

"It was Peasblossom," I replied. The play grew more interesting as it developed, evoking much applause. It was, indeed, a remarkable spectacle. The acting was quite good, and the whole scene with its romantic setting was one that would never be forgotten; the entrances and exits of the various characters from the

shadowed trees; the mighty booming of the Atlantic on the rocks below, and a full moon above.

> "That mystic light which Phœbe flings
> O'er ghostly night, o'er haunted things;
> Where pixies dance in fairy rings,
> And angels pause with flutt'ring wings,
> To warn us 'gainst their spell."

When all was over an impromptu dance was arranged, the house-party dancing with the characters in costume, even to the tiny fairies, and thus another very charming scene was enacted.

In this romantic situation, and amongst old friends, I will say "farewell" for the present to my other friends, my readers, who have accompanied me with so much patience, and, I trust, some interest and pleasure in "A Wayfarer's Caravan."

THE END

PRINTED BY
WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED,
LONDON AND BECCLES, ENGLAND.

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CORNHILL MAGAZINE

Edited by
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